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ABSTRACT

The manual describes a variety of media approaches in the United States, Hong Kong, India, and Pakistan to changing attitudes toward the disabled. Four principles of media communications are stressed: (1) children's television is an important vehicle for changing attitudes; (2) it is vital to know the audience; (3) active participation by the target audience is the goal; and (4) begin with the indigenous structures of any culture. First, development of a disability awareness component for the American television program, Sesame Street, is reviewed. Among Hong Kong activities described are: the Festival of Arts with the Disabled, the International Arts Symposium, cable television, the Television Magazine format series, and the Children's Media Workshop. Indian programs described include: a workshop with the Central Institute for Educational Technology; a workshop on Childhood Disability; and a UNICEF consultancy. Activities in Pakistan include production of public service announcements, a photography project, a Workshop on Media and People with Disabilities, and an in-house UNICEF workshop on children and the media. Commentaries on the manual are provided by Robert Ruffner, formerly with the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, Louise Duval of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology of Fordham University, and Sandra Gordon of the National Easter Seal Society. (DB)

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47 DEVELOPING STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT DISABILITY: EXPERIENCES IN THE U.S., HONG KONG, INDIA AND PAKISTAN

By Barbara Kolucki

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Preface and Acknowledgements

The World Rehabilitation Fund through a grant from the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) has administered the International Exchange of Experts and Information in Rehabilitation (IEEIR) since 1978 with the primary purpose of making available to U.S. disability specialists opportunities to enrich and influence policy and practice here in the U.S.

This goal is achieved by awarding fellowships to U.S. "Gate-Keepers" to carry out brief, focused studies overseas (currently in Africa, Asia, the Pacific Region and the Middle East). These fellows are then expected to prepare papers for publication in relevant U.S. journals as well as to give presentations at National Conferences in the U.S. where the ideas obtained abroad can be promulgated.

In addition, the WRF-IEEIR publishes four monographs a year which are usually prepared by one or more disability "experts" from other countries and include commentaries by U.S. peers.

The author of this monograph, Ms. Barbara Kolucki happens to be a Hong-Kong-based citizen of the U.S. who has a most unusual perspective on the world in relation to how attitudes toward disability are influenced by the media, especially children's attitudes and children's television. This perspective has developed through some extraordinary opportunities Ms. Kolucki has had to provide consultation in various parts of the world, especially in Asia.

We asked Ms. Kolucki to share her experiences because we thought it would offer to the U.S. disability community and others a new perspective in how "First World consultants" might offer their experiences and expertise to so-called "Third World" countries. Ms. Kolucki's method of "consulting" allows the "consultees" to use and develop their existing abilities and strengths. This is a valuable lesson to us all.

We are appreciative to Barbara Duncan of Rehabilitation International for putting us in touch with Barbara Kolucki. We acknowledge also, Rehabilitation International's involvement as a sponsor of this monograph by offering us their desk-top publishing capabilities and we are indebted to RI's Kathy Marchael whose expertise brought this book to fruition.

We feel it is extremely important to have the support of people in rehabilitation who have a worldview and who see this monograph series as a valuable contribution to the literature on disability. We are therefore extremely grateful to Dr. The Hon. Harry S.Y. Fang and Norman Acton for agreeing to write the Foreword and Introduction respectively.

We also appreciate commentaries provided by Robert Ruffner, Sandra Gordon and Louise Duval who have added their perspectives to this monograph. And to you the reader, we will appreciate your comments, reactions, and suggestions.

Diane Elizabeth Woods
Project Director
International Exchange of Experts
and Information in Rehabilitation

Foreword

I am honored and pleased to be asked to write a Foreword for this publication, sponsored by the World Rehabilitation Fund with the involvement of Rehabilitation International, on the work of Ms. Barbara Kolucki on mass media and disability projects in several Asian countries during the 1980s.

Asia has taken a long time and come a long way in dealing with problems of disability. The International Year of the Disabled, declared by the United Nations, made a great impact in arousing public attitudes and the awareness of governments. Each and every country in this part of the world has made encouraging attempts in recognizing equal rights and equal opportunities for disabled people in their territory. Ms. Barbara Kolucki, an expert in her own right in the field of education, gave up an attractive and rewarding job in the United States, came to the East in the early '80s, stayed and worked amongst its people and became completely absorbed and devoted in helping to promote a better tomorrow for disabled people in the Orient.

I highly and respectfully recommend this book which she has written to the readers, not only of the profession, but to all who are interested in the disabled and the East.

Dr. the Hon. Harry S.Y. Fang

Dr. Fang is a world renowned orthopedic surgeon, a leader in the development of Asian and Pacific rehabilitation services and an ex-officio member of the Legislative Council for Hong Kong. He served as President of Rehabilitation International from 1980-84.

Introduction

For at least forty years savants of the rehabilitation field have been proclaiming the importance of public education as an instrument for the prevention of disability, for the generation of understanding of the problems faced by disabled people, and for the changing of attitudes about people who are disabled and their place in society. Over the years there were a few useful initiatives but, until recently, if measured on the global scale and evaluated by identifiable results, precious little really effective work was done.

The qualified success of the 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons was both cause and effect of a threshold being crossed and an awakening of interest in improving the delivery of information to the various publics. A happy consequence was the appearance on the world stage of a young special educator who, through a central role in the pioneering children's television program, *Sesame Street*, was herself a pioneer in both the theory and practice of using the media for public education about disability and the surrounding issues. Since then Barbara Kolucki has been the primary resource in a 1982 United Nations seminar which set out guidelines for performance in this area, has taken the message to groups and meetings around the world, and has been a consultant for the development of media use in several countries.

In this volume Ms. Kolucki permits us to share these experiences and, while doing so, to join with her in the process of unfolding the human resources that are available. She gives us many of the basic principles of effective media use and shows how they can be shaped and applied in a variety of cultural situations. The result is a kind of handbook which, together with the document produced by the 1982 UN seminar, "Improving Communications about People with Disabilities", should be read by anyone interested in this subject and in doing something about it.

Norman Acton

Norman Acton is the former Secretary General of Rehabilitation International .

Personal Introduction

In the past eighteen years of my life, I have had some incredible professional and personal life experiences. I have worked in one of most unique U.S. corporate structures where I had the chance to be friends with "Big Bird"–and together, we all learned how to "share the Street" for the first time with children who are disabled. I have lived and worked in Asia where I have had the opportunity to be a part of several groundbreaking projects–the first Magazine Television Series about People with Disabilities in Hong Kong; the Indian Government's largest project in Educational Television and; the first nationally televised Public Service Announcements in Pakistan where a non-disabled child talked honestly about what she thought about children who were disabled.

Those professional and personal experiences have nurtured me and taught me a great deal about myself–and this world. I have failed–many times. Often I was "too American". And yet all of those mistakes and the pre-conditioning were necessary steps to ***both*** *give me time to understand the new situations I was in* ***as well as*** *give me the confidence to share what I did know and the skills I did have while allowing the people I was working with to "take the best from me and leave the rest". And now, a few years later, I also feel that these experiences would be valuable to me if I worked someday again in a Western country.*

The best part about all of this for me is that I have met, become friends with, cared for and been cared for by some of the most beautiful disabled and non-disabled children in all of these countries. From them and their families, I learned about different cultures, customs, religions, philosophies–and the commonalities among all. In the area of media and people with disabilities–the similarities in the history of negative images and stereotypes far outweigh any differences.

What follows is a discussion of my experiences in these four countries. All of them involved a great deal of advocacy work and the training of people to plan for or produce media (particularly television) in the areas of prevention, integration, rehabilitation and attitude change about children and adults who are disabled. Included is the process of advocacy, some of the training procedures and sample scripts, treatments or anecdotes. Observations are made regarding cross-cultural adaptations and some of the obstacles to progress based on each country's needs, priorities, personnel, and cultural stereotypes.

I would first like to share some of my "foundations" and perhaps, my own prejudices which influence my work. Some of them are "just because of the way I am" and others are because I have had the good fortune of having many mentors, friends and experiences that have taught me to believe in the following:

1 I believe that Children's Television is one of the most important vehicles we have in any country–to reach children, disabled and not, with practical information while modeling positive, integrative attitudes. It is a media that is gaining popularity and accessibility in nearly every country in the world. And in reaching children in their early, formative years, we have the potential to prevent some of the negative, stereotypic attitudes about people with disabilities from forming. We are potentially saving ourselves thousands of whatever the currency that we would later have to spend on trying to change those firmly entrenched attitudes that many of us as adults have grown up with.

If it is produced well (not synonymous with high technology or high budgets), Children's Television will attract adult audiences. I have personally experienced this in situations as different as the U.S. urban areas and Indian villages.

One reality in just about every country is that Children's Television is "hard to sell". In a great

number of countries, producers of Children's programs are just out of school or at the bottom of the professional television ladder. In my opinion, Children's Television can be one of the most creative (and sometimes most difficult) areas of television. The creativity often comes about because the producers and other members of the production team get a chance at "being a child again"–growing and learning again themselves. They discover that work can be an enormous amount of fun, as well as effective, entertaining and educational to millions of children.

Though it is generally accepted that in many areas of media, the U.S. excels, there is much more that could be done in the area of Children's Television by the government, the networks, cable systems, etc. There is still very little in the area of children's programming regarding integration or "issues" of importance about children who are disabled. (The same applies to the dearth of "magazine-type" programming for/about adults with disabilities and their families).

2 Whatever the situation, the adage applies "know your audience." This is applicable in any media situation–one has to know the needs, interests and priorities of the children or adults who will be receiving the message. I have no doubt that my effectiveness as a consultant is proportional to the openness and amount of time and interest taken in getting to know the uniqueness of the country/organization/culture/individuals with whom I am working. And no matter where I was working–it was equally important to understand and respect regional, ethnic, religious and other differences–within the same country. It has been consistently shown that time and research done with one's target audience prior to the development of any media product tend to increase the product's quality and effectiveness. This procedure would seem common sense yet it is rarely carried out.

3 Active participation from the target audience is what it is all about–especially with regard to non-disabled people and their attitudes or behavior toward children and adults with disabilities. Parents need to know what they can do today with their child who is disabled (especially in countries where there is little access to social services for the majority of people). Non-disabled children want and need to know the answers to questions like "what do I do when I meet someone who is disabled?" Adults as well are inquisitive about difference but have been socialized not to ask questions. Children and adults, disabled and not, can be empowered by good media products.

4 Begin with the indigenous structure and build bridges from there. This means that I had to learn about and include in any products familiar resources such as: the traditional media of the country (folktales, mythology, puppetry, etc.), the media infrastructure (Government or private), people with disabilities who had already become interested and involved in some media/advocacy work, etc. And it meant involving any of these people as the "experts" and my simply building a bridge.

And I learned to use the term "Consultant" as one who builds these bridges and not one who is the "expert".

There are many more lessons that I learned, many more cross-cultural similarities and differences that I experienced, many mistakes that I made along with the successes. Some of these follow under the "Consultant's" experiences in the U.S., Hong Kong, India and Pakistan while "Developing some Strategies for Communications about Disability".

Sesame Street, USA

It was 1974-75 and I was studying at Teachers' College, Columbia University. I had taught and worked with children with a variety of disabilities for many years. And because of this practical background, I was free to pursue graduate school courses and activities not in the area of concentration, which was special education. I chose Communications, as well as serving as a Teaching Assistant to a few professors in the Special Education Department.

At this same time, Children's Television Workshop (CTW), the producers of **Sesame Street**, a highly successful, daily educational television program for pre-school children, began to develop a "new" aspect of their curriculum. They were exploring the development of segments for and about children who were mentally retarded (and later, with other disabilities). For quite some time, parents and teachers of children with, for example, Down Syndrome, had been saying to people at CTW "Hey, my child who is mentally retarded loves the show. She/he watches it and learns from it. You have children of many races, you teach words in other languages–WHY aren't there children that look like mine "on the **Street** too?"

The creators of **Sesame Street** had always tried to respond to the expressed needs of the viewing children–and those expressed by their caregivers. And so, members of the Research Staff came to Columbia University, Teacher's College and asked the professors for some initial guidance. They were excited about the possibilities–yet including children who were mentally retarded on t.v. had not been done in any major, systematic way before (**Mr. Rogers**, another U.S. children's t.v. show had included segments periodically). Millions of children watch **Sesame Street**–the staff was anxious that what would be produced would be accurate, sensitive and accepted by viewers.

The professors provided the expert guidance and credentials needed for CTW to begin the process. The program's research staff, however, was interested in developing some technique for evaluating their progress. They also wanted someone to work with them who knew the area, had the time, and was willing to learn, to take risks and to get "her hands dirty" in a totally new area. I was recommended for the job.

During the initial months, the major task was to develop a "Taxonomy of Television Media Presentations". This was an attempt to define what was being presented in a given television segment as well as how it was being taught. It sought to assist the research staff in determining if a particular set of techniques were more effective than others in segments that were produced for and about children who were mentally retarded. The Sesame Street staff had made the decision to produce and air segments during the 1976-77 broadcast season that were based on the Kennedy Foundation's "Families Play to Grow" activities and to incorporate these segments for children who were mentally retarded into their regular, daily program.

While developing the taxonomy, a lot of time was spent exchanging information about children who were mentally retarded **as well as** learning from the research staff about educational television and what is called the "CTW Model". This model includes a great deal of formative research prior to production consisting of: cooperation between the research and production staffs, a lot a time spent observing children watching the show, and testing children to determine what they both enjoyed and learned from the various approaches. There is also a division called Community Education Services which is devoted to helping adult caregivers learn about the program and how they can best help children to maximize its' positive potential. **Learning about the importance of spending time with one's target audience and of grassroots community work was deeply impressed on me and became the foundation for all future work.**

After developing the Taxonomy, production was well underway for many of the first year's segments. Many

Many of these segments included children with Down Syndrome and other types of developmental disabilities carrying out simple physical activities and games–either with one of the Muppets, with a cast member, or with non-disabled children. The CTW Staff was committed to this new area, yet there was no one on staff full-time to provide constant input and feedback to the various divisions at CTW. To the credit of the Vice-President of the Community Education Services (CES) Division, a position was created for a Special Education Coordinator and I was hired full-time. Although I worked for CES, my time throughout the seven years spent at CTW was divided between CES as well as Research, Production, Magazine, Products and other divisions as needed.

How to begin? This was not only a new area for CTW but it was also one of the very few times that a "content expert" was on staff and activities/time shared with many divisions. This was certainly different from teaching. Or was it? My best teachers were those who had demonstrated that 1) one teaches by helping chidren (people) to realize what they already know and build on that, and 2) everyone can learn–even the most severely disabled child or the person with the most entrenched negative stereotypic attitudes. This approach was tried, and it often worked.

Every division at CTW had its own working style, its own priorities and its own personality. Just as will be discussed later on Asian Countries–one had to fit into **their** system to be at all effective. The challenge was to determine how to work within that framework and to enhance it with new information. Following are highlights of some of my activities during the years at CTW:

- **Sensitize Staff.** The commitment had been made by the CTW Management to include children who were mentally retarded on the program, but very few people knew much about the topic, or had spent time with children with any kind of disability. Though the process was slow, CTW "knew" that gradually, it would probably include children with other disabilities. It had already included the Little Theatre of the Deaf and one of the members, Linda Bove, was quite popular as a semi-regular cast member. Still–the "philosophy or attitude" towards this new area was yet to be defined. I was extremely lucky that the training at Columbia was progressive in terms of attitudes such as normalization and mainstreaming. And though it was very important to present activities on television that were appropriate **for** children with disabilities, we recognized that the way these children and activities were presented was equally if not more important. Millions of non-disabled children (and their older siblings and caregivers) would be watching. We were in the position to be part of shaping their attitudes towards people who have disabilities.

The Vice-President for CES, Evelyn Davis, arranged for me to speak at management meetings of top-level staff and to spend time with the staff in nearly every division. People were sensitized to some of their own feelings about disability; information was given about the media's "usual" negative portrayals of children and adults with disabilities; new technologies of the day (e.g. captioning) were discussed and suggestions were made for each Division's contribution to reaching this new audience.

- **Providing on-going input to the scriptwriters** regarding appropriate, creative activities that could be developed into program segments. The research staff had early on developed what they called a "Writers' Notebook", consisting of suggestions for program ideas and activities and their translations into television language. This same approach was used for this new curriculum area. Since this was an experimental area, one learned, over the years, a great deal about what worked–and what didn't. Two examples:

1 The writers at Sesame Street, some of the most creative anywhere, have won numerous "Emmys" and other awards. Yet, when asked for the first time to write segments for children who were mentally retarded–many of them were at a loss. With the exception of one writer who was a

mother of a child with Down Syndrome, very few had any exposure to children who were retarded. Often the scripts were brief sketches of some simple physical activity with very little of the "flavor" of those award-winning scripts. We had to figure out a way to get that "creativity" back in. Finally, we asked the writers to write their most creative scripts–and then we would provide examples of how one could adapt them to make them more appropriate for children who were mentally retarded. This worked well.

2 There are many tried and true examples of "good activities for children"–especially those used in classes with children who are disabled. One is the "classic" activity of using a paper bag with objects inside and letting the children identify the objects by feel. Well, this activity was suggested as one for the "Play to Grow" segments. It didn't work. Why not? Well, one had to constantly be aware of the fact that some activities that might be interesting and workable in a classroom would not **translate to the medium of television.** How could we expect the "viewing" children to be interested when they couldn't "participate" at all? They couldn't see or feel the objects. Wouldn't it work better for television if we used a transparent plastic bag and blindfolded the children on the set? Or used a "tv visual technique" so that viewers could "magically see" the objects? There probably were many alternatives but the point was that–techniques proven in one environment or medium always need to be re-evaluated for use in another.

- Work closely with the research staff in their activities to constantly evaluate the impact of the segments. It was through the research staff that much of the information passed through to writers and producers. One provided input in terms of reviewing scripts prior to finalization; monitoring the taping at the studio whenever possible; participating in brainstorming sessions that were organized for the Production Staff.

- In the position of Special Education Coordinator for the Community Education Services Division, one had to work with both national and field staff who were the backbone of reaching caregivers around the country and providing them with input on how they could help children to get the most out of each show. National and field staffs worked with parent and teachers groups–they were in touch with people from every part of the U.S.–and now they were responsible for reaching a new group, parents and teachers of children who were retarded. They were provided with written material and staff training and sensitivity sessions were held.

- The CES staff was also responsible for providing on-going supplementary material to caregivers around the country. There were weekly "Script Highlights" and periodic Activity Books that were written and disseminated. I helped write these publications and included information for people working with children who were disabled **as well as** information about children with disabilities for people working with non-disabled children.

- After the first year of producing segments for children who were mentally retarded, a summative research study was commissioned. Also, by the end of 1976, the CES Staff had a great deal of anecdotal feedback from viewers and their caregivers.

The "once-weekly Play-to-Grow" segment was questioned as the most appropriate way to continue. It was felt that a broadened "focus" would be more in-tune with the dominant philosophy in the field of special education–that of integration and mainstreaming (Public Law 94-142 had recently been signed). Children with other disabilities–physical, visual and hearing–as well as children who were mentally retarded, could be more naturally integrated throughout the show, according to their abilities. And so, in addition to the current segments designed to teach one group of children, CTW might consider adopting an "umbrella" philosophy and broaden Sesame Street's curriculum goal areas to stress individual similarities and differences. Suggestions were given as to how this might be achieved in the various existing "Goal Areas" of the Curriculum. Resources in terms of

possible Consultants and sites and activities to film were included.

In the following years, the curriculum did expand. Children with other disabilities began to "share the Street". Linda Bove, the actress who is deaf, became more of a "regular". Sometimes the segments that were written specifically dealt with some aspect of life with a disability. For example:

- Linda explains to Big Bird (and the viewers) how she can babysit and knows when a baby cries by "feeling the vibrations".
- a little boy who uses a wheelchair and Itzakh Perlman discuss polio and how they both *hate stairs*.
- a young girl asks a woman who is blind how she knows when to cross a street.

In other segments, children or adults with disabilities are naturally integrated with no mention made about a disability. Whatever the goal of the segment or the activity is–they are part of it. For example:

- Linda is having a "bad day"–talking about emotions.
- Bob is singing a song about "five fingers and what they can do" and two of the six children in the scene are disabled.
- there is a film about "polka dot people" talking about "all the kinds of people living on Sesame Street, a few of whom happen to be disabled.

- After a few years, it was decided at CES that a new activity book for teachers and parents should be written. This time, the book would include activities with the adaptations necessary to "mainstream" children with disabilities. **SHARING THE STREET: Activities for ALL Children** was written for people with little or no knowledge of special education as well as for the educator with training and experience in the field. Two contributing authors, Michael Behrmann and Millie Slowik, both with extensive experience with children who were disabled, and I developed the book.

The book is divided into six chapters, the first five dealing with the senses and based on the **Sesame Street** Curriculum. The last chapter is on "Sensitivity," helping children to increase their understanding of others.

In 1980, Sharing the Street won a Media Award from One-to-One, a New York based advocacy organization working for people who are mentally retarded.

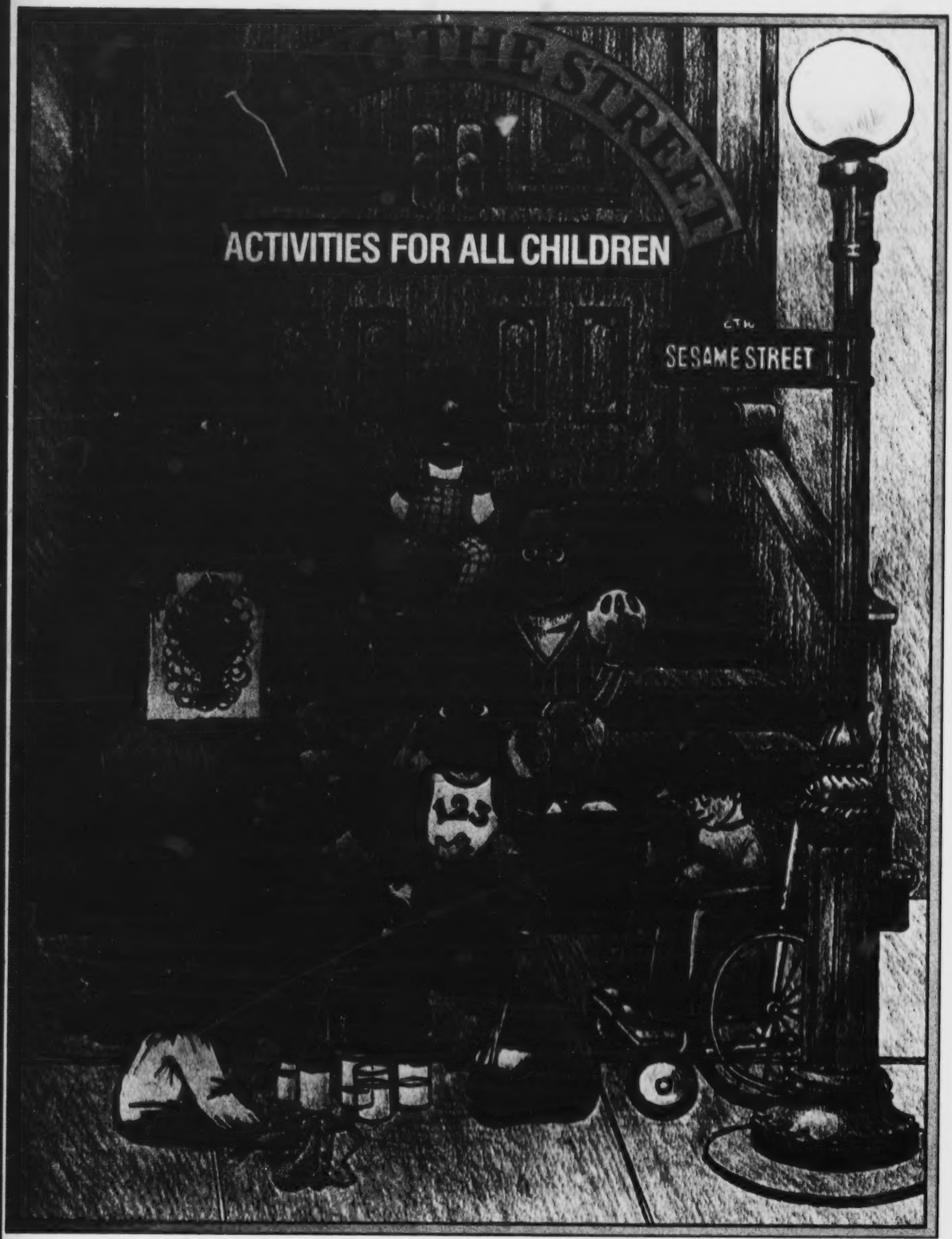
(See next page for cover of "Sharing the Street")

In conclusion to this section, what follows are a few of the "lessons" and "growth experiences".

- Through a research study (Guskin, Morgan, Cherkes and Peel 1979) CTW learned that non-disabled children enjoyed watching "sign language" on Sesame Street and they liked Linda Bove. BUT the viewing children were confused about what it meant to be deaf. Many thought that to be deaf meant speaking with one's hands: How could we expect pre-schoolers to know that deafness means one can't hear if we were never explicit about it. We had to tell them carefully and accurately what we wanted them to know.

- Another study (Ardi 1977) reported that children who were mentally retarded understood the concepts presented in segments designed for them, but that sometimes the segments were too slow and simple. After all–wasn't that educationally sound–that children who were mentally retarded needed lessons presented slowly and simply? Well, sometimes, children who were mentally retarded (and not) found these segments a bit boring. We had to remember that they were becoming sophisticated television viewers too. We had to take care that our messages would hold the attention of the viewers–or else nothing would be learned.

- It was suggested to the cast that sometimes, children who were mentally retarded might need more assistance than the non-disabled children participating on the set. And so, on


ACTIVITIES FOR ALL CHILDREN
CTW
SESAME STREET

many of the first segments, one would see a cast member giving "extra attention" to a child with, for example, Down Syndrome. We received feedback that non-disabled viewers thought that "these children were too slow" or wondered "why did Bob pay so much attention to her?" We had to be careful that our messages were sensitive, and that we were not inadvertently giving a negative message by our actions while trying to present mainstreaming and positive attitudes.

- It was difficult to predict who would become comfortable with dsiability on television and who would not; changing attitudes can be a very complex activity.

- There are often people to continue carrying the message after the initiator leaves. At **Sesame Street**, one of the earliest and best advocates was Emily Kingsley, a writer and mother of Jason, who has Down Syndrome. Emily has led the show with many beautiful scripts–not only about children who are mentally retarded but she has also written some of the best about Linda/Little Theatre of the Deaf and people with physical disabilities. Bob McGrath, one of the cast, has always interacted comfortably and expertly with children with disabilities including Linda–learning and using sign language. And many of the activities at the CES, Research, Magazine and other Divisions continue to include activities for or about children with disabilities. There is a time to move on...

HONG KONG

The Beginnings

Hong Kong is unique. It has a population of five and a half million people living on an island of 29 square miles and a part of the peninsula of mainland China. Approximately 97% of the people are Chinese, with the remaining 3% a mix of British, America, Indian, Pakistani and various other groups.

It is a financial capital of the world existing primarily by making money on a wide variety of trade. People work six or seven days a week, almost 365 days a year, except during Chinese New Year. It has been said that the average local Chinese works seven days a week: many have two jobs.

Though it is now becoming more important, social services and social conscience programs have not traditionally been the priority in Hong Kong. The Government continues to expand its services in both quality and quantity. However, historically, it has been the voluntary agencies, e.g. the Hong Kong Council of Social Service that have led the way in areas such as rehabilitation.

At the end of 1981 I came to live in Hong Kong during the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP). The year brought about significant changes in Hong Kong as it did in most parts of the world. There definitely was increased media exposure and interest–articles, public services advertisements, documentaries, and community events. As in most countries, it seemed that many people working in the media viewed the end of IYDP as the end of the need for special focus on this population.

Though difficult, the initial advocacy work was absolutely necessary for one to "let go" of a great deal of the "American" way of thinking about the media and people with disabilities. Being American, a woman and not speaking Cantonese were drawbacks–and it didn't matter what your credentials were or who you had worked with in the States.

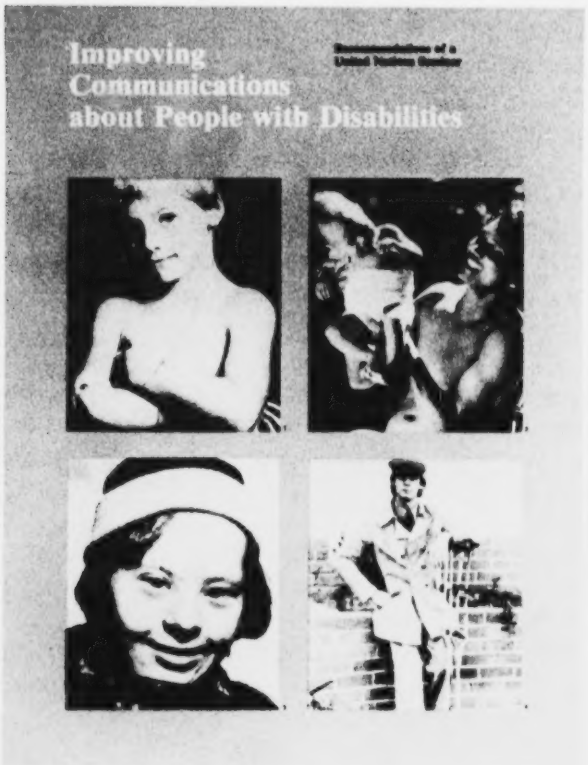
This "adjustment time" did lay the groundwork for a lot of learning which would be helpful in all future work, but especially in any cross-cultural situation. One has to "prove one's worth" which meant that one needed to think of new, creative ways to convince people, to adapt ideas, to sit back and *listen*. What were the cultural differences and similarities? What were the best ways to share ideas and then allow people to move at their own speed according to *their* needs and interests? (As with the SESAME STREET experience–this all required *time* and making a lot of mistakes along the way).

As happens everywhere, there were a few people working in the Social Service field who were already leading the way in innovative methods to educate the public about people with disabilities. They were the ones who listened to ideas and experiences and who continued to take the lead locally. Some of the initial steps I took which paved the way to reach and interest more people about using various types of media for and about people with disabilities included:

- Meeting with Dr. the Honorable Harry S.Y. Fang, a long time world leader in rehabilitation, for advice and support.

- The leaders at the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, Rehabilitation Division, suggested that the Guidelines "Improving Communications about People with Disabilities" from the United Nations Media Seminar in Vienna should be distributed in English and also translated into Chinese reaching as many people as possible during 1982/3 who were working in the Media and in Rehabilitation Fields.

The Guidelines "Improving Communications about People with Disabilities" were written as a result of a 1982 United Nations Seminar held in Vienna on the topic. The Seminar and booklet were designed to help the information media in accomplishing the goals of the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981. I was part of the Seminar and edited the Booklet with Ms. Barbara Duncan of Rehabilitation International. The Guidelines have been used and translated in many countries and feedback indicates that they are as applicable today as when they were written in 1982.



- Becoming a member of the Committee on Public Education in Rehabilitation (COMPERE)–a Government Committee set up during 1981 and chaired by the Commissioner for Rehabilitation with a counterpart COMPERE committee based at the Hong Kong Council of Social Service. The Government's Committee included people from various Government Departments–Information Services, Social Welfare, Medical & Health, Education and various Rehabilitation Services from the Voluntary Sector, particularly from the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS). The COMPERE Committee at the HKCSS includes members from each disability group, along with selected co-opt members. The Committees are responsible for the planning and coordination of all publicity efforts in the area of rehabilitation–using as many media as possible, according to the yearly budget.

- Teaching courses at the Hong Kong University and at various institutions sponsoring classes, e.g. the YM/WCA, elementary/special schools, women's groups. These courses covered either children and television, people with disabilities and the media or any combination of the two. Many guest "lectures" were also given, along with quite a few radio interviews which explained the philosophy and importance of positive, accurate media messages about children and adults with disabilities.

- A brief, part-time experiment was done with one of the local television programs for children. The idea was to include one or two stories about children who were disabled on each show. Scripts were written and ideas given to the producers. For example, one featured an adolescent girl who was blind taking a friend around Hong Kong on a walk, on a tandem bike, on the MTR/subway. This experience was one of the "failures" previously mentioned. Why? Well, the production schedule was so tight and time and staff were needed to translate the script and make either illustrations to accompany the story or to go out and actually "shoot" the story with real children. They just did not have the time or staff or budget to do this well. And even though television itself is very sophisticated in Hong Kong, often the people who are producing children's t.v. are just out of school and have very little t.v. experience and virtually no experience with children, especially children with disabilities. The result–a rushed job, sometimes inaccurate (the girl who is blind sitting in the front seat of the tandem bike) and therefore a lost opportunity to change attitudes or impart fresh, sensitive information.

The Festival of Arts With the Disabled

The Festival of Arts with the Disabled was the first of its kind in Hong Kong and in Asia. It was the brainchild of a theatre/television producer, Bernadette Lau. The Festival was a chance for people with and without disabilities to explore the creative arts together. It was also meant to provide the public with exposure to children and adults with disabilities. Throughout Hong Kong's community, for various cultural and accessibility reasons, one sees relatively few people with disabilities. (See WRF-IEEIR Special Issue of *INTERCHANGE:* "Building Non-Handicapping Environments–Policies and Problems Related to Accessibility.")

The Festival spanned two weeks and estimates are that over 50,000 people with and without disabilities participated in 40 different events and venues with thousands more spectators at various events. Some of the major activities included a huge mural painting project for disabled and non-disabled children; a "Please Touch" Art Exhibit made accessible to people who are blind but enjoyed by a totally unexpected number of sighted people; a "sound playground" created out of household materials and; an excellent studio performance by the first ever acting group from the Federation of Handicapped Youth and directed by a well known local theatre director. Numerous international artists also performed–including the U.S. National Theatre of the Deaf, artists and therapists from Europe including Gina Levete, Wolfgang Stange and Shirley Salmon.

The Festival had excellent coverage by the local newspaper, radio and television. A "special" on one of the most popular Chinese evening variety shows featured the Festival. There was a two-part special on the English channel "weekly magazine/current events" program stressing not only the Festival, but particularly the media's help/hindrance in the integration of people with disabilities into all aspects of life. Participating in the pre-production planning and research of the English language programs and serving as one of the main persons interviewed for the shows gave me the opportunity for positive input.

The International Arts Symposium

An associated International Dialogue brought together all the international guests/performers to share ideas, art forms, philosophies and discuss possible future directions. I served as Chairperson for this event.

The Symposium was held on April 18-20 1986. Four questions were presented to the delegates and participants on the first day and reiterated several times during the next three days. These questions kept the group focused and helped participants to objectively analyze each section as to relevance to their work and future applications. These questions were:

1 What kind of programs or activities can be instituted to help develop the talents of people with disabilities? How can they then be integrated into the mainstream artistic community?

2 Given the Festival's ideal of integrating people with and without disabilities, what other societal changes need to happen to help reach this goal?

3 Should the Festival be replicated in Hong Kong, or in the Asia-Pacific Region? Is the concept, in fact, replicable in other Asian countries? What model or combination of models is appropriate?

4 What kind of networking can be established to share resources within the region and to strengthen these types of activities for the future?

The three day Symposium included panels and open discussions on various topics including:

- the philosophy and work of the International

Committee, Arts with the Handicapped, Washington D.C.– who co-sponsored the Symposium.

- status reports on various arts activities from countries represented at the Symposium including the People's Republic of China, India, Taiwan, U.K., Austria and Germany.

- clips from and discussion about various award-winning television programs and films from around the world.

A Workshop/Demonstration was presented by the National Theatre of the Deaf from the USA, the Japanese Theatre of the Deaf, along with a Creative Movement Workshop Session and Music Workshop Session.

Personal stories from people who had created and worked on various disability-focused Media presentations certainly was one of the highlights of the weekend. The first was from an award-winning Hong Kong television director/producer, Ms. Zen Wai Chu. Ms. Zen shared the stage with Mr. Simon Sum and Mr. Wong Kwan Chung, the two men with disabilities who acted in the Hong Kong documentary, "Born To Live". From them we learned about the elements of the film that made it so sensitive, accurate and successful. Most important, people with disabilities, not non-disabled actors, were speaking for themselves. Humor, curiosity and awkwardness are depicted as normal, human characteristics. Disability need not be a tragic story or a super-hero tale. Ms. Zen's sensitivity and professionalism was apparent and she called for other directors and producers to become involved in productions relating to disability. The other point stressed by the Symposium participants was that this documentary is one very fine example–a start –and the future should also include people with disabilities naturally integrated into regular types of programming such as children's television, advertising, dramas, etc.

Mr. Alan Toy presented his story–how he has been involved in changes in the U.S. film and television industry. He has been instrumental in setting up and leading the Media Access Office in California. This Office is an activist organization in the Hollywood community, working to get producers to hire actors with disabilities. Mr. Toy is an actor and director, as well as an advocate, and as a person with a disability has personally experienced the move from playing the role of a patient to that of the doctor and the change involving people with disabilities beginning to be looked at as consumers of products and therefore worth including in commercial advertising.

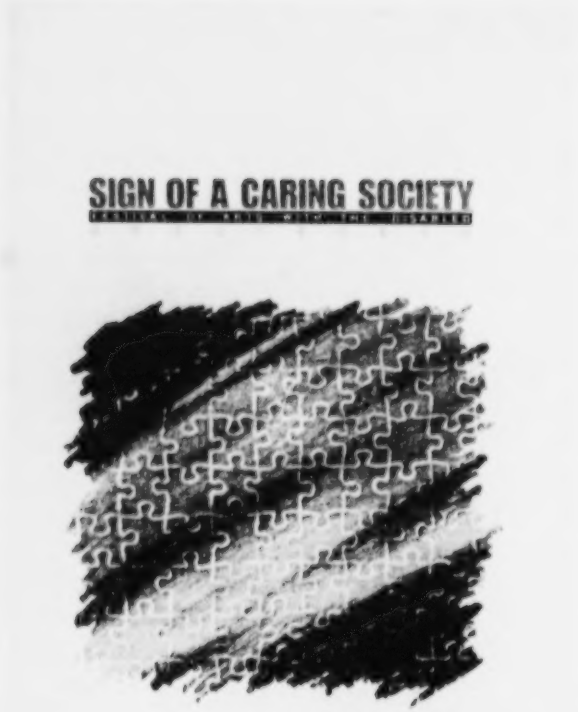
This International Symposium was about COMPETENCE. Recommendations called for developing the competence of people with disabilities in all aspects of the arts–on stage/film/tv and behind the scenes. Participants stressed the competence and POWER of people with disabilities being advocates for themselves whenever possible within a given country/culture. Also discussed was the agenda to develop the competence of those working in the rehabilitation field–to branch out and develop their own artistic skills to use in their work.

The closing session focused on trying to answer the four questions presented to all participants. Many thoughts were shared and recommendations made. The most often reiterated were:

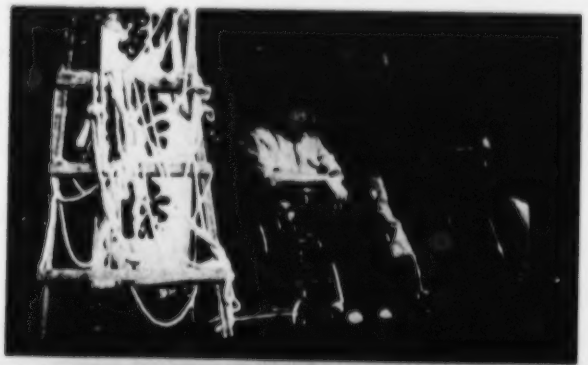
- Involve people with disabilities in every aspect of art/media activities–planning, production, public education, etc. This might be difficult in some countries where people with disabilities are rarely seen or heard–but one can begin with something small and appropriate to the community. Examples might include:

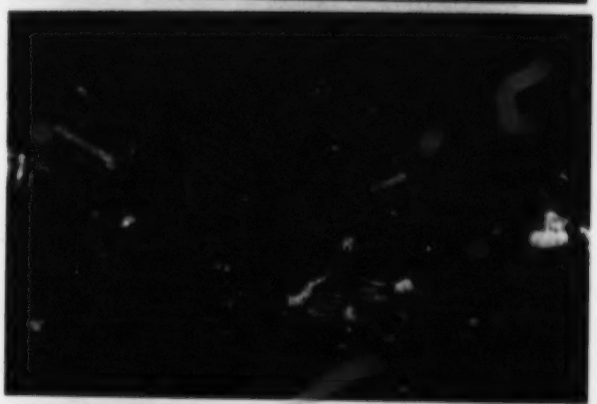
- hiring people with disabilities to work behind the scenes (and eventually in front of) with a local puppet theatre;

- including a child or two with a disability on a children's t.v. program, etc.



- Encourage members of the artistic community to work more closely with the community of people who are disabled–in their schools, institutions, hospitals, community centers and, wherever possible, integrate non-disabled people into these grass-roots activities. Start small and according to resources. Take the events to people as well as bringing people to the arts. Some examples include:
  - start a small children's theater group for both disabled and non-disabled children;
  - perform a dance or music concert at the local hospitals and institutions–and see if you can get staff, patients and residents to participate in some way;
  - invite professional dancers/actors/performers to schools for children with disabilities.
- Work toward creating an office, such as the Media Office in California to serve as an advocate both for arts therapy activities and for integrating artists with disabilities into mainstream art/media activities. Education of the general public should be central to these activities.
- Encourage internship programs in the arts and media–not only on the performance side, but also in managerial and administrative posts. People with disabilities could work as interns at the box office, as ushers, in pre-production research, etc. Key organizations should be encouraged to give arts scholarships to local people with disabilities.





Soon after the Festival, the Association of Arts with the Disabled (ADA), was formed in Hong Kong and has been responsible for many of the suggested activities including training, internships and public awareness events.

Committee on Public Education on Rehabilitation (COMPERE)

As previously mentioned, there are two COMPERE Committees in Hong Kong–one is part of the Government Structure, under the Commissioner for Rehabilitation. The other is a "sister" committee, part of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service in the voluntary sector.

Both Committees have done groundbreaking work in the area of media over the past seven years and I have been part of many of the experiences, activities and projects. Many of the major activities have been part of the work of BOTH Committees–e.g. preparing for cable television's arrival in Hong Kong, assisting the Government Production Company (Radio Television Hong Kong) to produce the first ever Magazine Series on Disability, responding to the White Paper of the Broadcasting Review Board in assessing broadcasting in Hong Kong, and other projects.

It has been an outstanding educational process to serve as a member of both COMPERE Committees. As one of the very few Westerners, it was important to be part of the Committee, the "team". It felt right sharing ideas, philosophy, examples slowly and as part of the process of the work of each Committee. In this way also, all of the members of the Committees learn about and become able to "carry the message" themselves. They become their own advocates and gain a certain amount of expertise in the area of media and public education. This process is a slow one in many ways. But it worked for Hong Kong. And it is much longer lasting, local and community/culturally based.

Cable Television In Hong Kong

Over the past three years, Hong Kong has been preparing for Cable Television. Applications for the franchise itself, collections of information about possible services for "special" groups such as those with disabilities, children, elderly people and surveys of all types have been part of these three years.

Interestingly, because of the work over the years of the COMPERE Committees in the area of media, and because of the importance of and commitment to the use of media as public education for and about people with disabilities, the "rehabilitation community" was better prepared than many of the other sectors of the Social Service Field.

We were aware in 1986 of the deadline for the initial application for the cable franchise. Discussions were held with members of the COMPERE Committee at the Hong Kong Council of Social Service about how we could have a "jump start" on reaching the competitors for the Franchise with "our agenda". This was the beginning of a PROCESS which started in 1986 and is still going on today. It reflects the steps taken by both COMPERE Committees and the unique cooperation and consultation that began and continues between people who will be working for Cable in Hong Kong and people with/without disabilities in the Rehabilitation Field. Some of the steps include:

1 Approaching Dr. Harry Fang, the Chairman of the Rehabilitation Development Coordinating Committee regarding the potential of cable television for people with disabilities. Discussions were held with Dr. Fang, the Commissioner for Rehabilitation and others regarding appropriate actions to take in order to ensure that programs will be produced that are of interest to and meet the needs of people with disabilities.

2 The Government COMPERE Committee presented a Discussion Paper to elicit members' views about specific program hours or a special channel for issues relating to rehabilitation. Issues addressed included: the overall objectives of 1)integration, 2)training and information and 3)public education; the possible types of programs including dramas, technical training films, magazine format, entertainment, and who would produce and/or fund these programs.

3 The Hong Kong Council of Social Service arranged separate meetings with the two leading contenders for the Cable Franchise and presented them with "the disability agenda" as well as many specific ideas for actual types of programming–ranging from programs being captioned or signed, to exercise shows for parents of babies who are disabled, to technical training films. (see more later on "the memo to Mr. Peter Lam on Cable" from the Council's COMPERE Committee).

4 The Government COMPERE Committee presented an up-to-date paper to members outlining meetings, deliberations and developments on the topic. An important t expansion of events took place:

...it became clear that the process of Cable coming to Hong Kong was taking longer than anyone imagined–for numerous reasons. Many members, particularly those with disabilities from the Council's COMPERE Committee felt that whenever possible, the Committee had the responsibility to ALSO encourage the commercial and government television producers to address the needs and interests of the people with disabilities and their families...

5 Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), the Government television producer was approached by the Commissioner for Rehabilitation to consider the production of a Magazine Format Series which could be broadcast on the two commercial stations and subsequently on cable. The initial resistance will be familiar to many: "people with disabilities are a small group among many–television cannot then do special programs for the elderly, the refugees, the poor, etc. There just are not enough resources to go around."

6 And so the Commissioner applied for funding from what is called "the Lotteries Fund" in Hong Kong and received a grant. The details are listed below under Magazine Format Series.

7 A list was made of international award-winning or exemplary films on various aspects of rehabilitation. These films could be shown, either in English or with the dubbing/captioning in the original language OR they could be dubbed or sub-titled in Chinese. The list was provided to some producers.

8 I also prepared a report summarizing relevant media work done in other countries–either in cable, magazine format, children's television, technical adaptations and any other aspects of television programming for or about disability.

9 In 1989, another disability meeting was held at the request of the Program Planning Executive of the now leading contender for the Cable Franchise. We had been asked to focus on:

a. The design of programs on rehabilitation to meet local needs of people with disabilities, and particularly the role of Cable TV in reaching the goal.

b. What kind of facilities can be built into the programs so that people who are deaf, blind or have other disabilities can also enjoy TV programs that are designed for the general public.

10 What follows is a copy of the memo that was presented to Mr. Peter Lam, a "contender" for Cable Services, from the Committee which in essence, is the synthesis of research, experience and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service's COMPERE Committee Members's OWN ideas and beliefs. I had prepared the memo but the other Committee Members ran the meeting and presented their recommendations. It was their "show" and I had little to add because of the thoroughness of their presentation. They OWN the work today–and though I could provide additional ideas, international resources or the eventual training of producers/writers, they carried the meeting themselves...

To: Mr. Peter Lam
From: Committee on Public Education in Rehabilitation, HKCSS
re: Cable TV Services for People with Disabilities

Per your request, here is some information which you might find useful in your preparations for Cable Services for People with Disabilities. We will be happy to provide additional information when necessary.

Overall Considerations

* You might want to consider having a Core Group of Disabled and Non-Disabled People who can be of service to you in areas of advice, monitoring, providing resources, possible talent, etc.
* Research has consistently shown that one of the BEST services is when cable companies provide opportunities for people with disabilities to be part of any and all aspects of the pre/post and production process – in the form of apprentices, scholarships, on-the-job training, use of local disabled talent, etc.
* In order to maximize your audience size AND to help promote positive attitudes toward people with disabilities – productions, whenever possible, can be structured to entertain and inform those who are non-disabled as well as people with disabilities.
* There are numerous international examples of "special programmes" for and about people with disabilities (see a partial listing later – we can provide you with some tapes to screen and contacts in other countries). In addition, our own RTHK recently produced a series of Magazine Programmes which serve as an excellent local example and a spin-off for other creative productions.
* There are numerous local and international award-winning or highly recommended films on just about any aspect of disability. You might want to consider using these with sub-titles or dubbing.

Possible Services

* Captioned programmes and/or sign language interpretation for any/all cable programming. Many countries have developed a "closed caption" system whereby the signal is transmitted through a decoder in the hearing impaired person's home/facility. This system is excellent, but expensive. And most countries who use sub-titles (like Hong Kong) find that the general audience is not disturbed by the captions – this is called "open captions".
* Descriptive Video Services for people who are blind or with low vision: This provides narrated descriptions of key visual elements in a tv programme that are important to the content and very likely would be missed by people with visual impairments. The technology uses Multi-Channel Television or STereo TV. The extra audio narration is recorded and inserted as a Separate Audio Channel (SAP) and then is broadcast along with the regular left and right channels. This system was first created by a blind doctor in the U.S. and she assisted WGBH, a public tv station in Boston, to experiment and refine the technique.
* Teletext – this is a continuous flow of printed information of use and interest to all audiences, but especially useful for people who are physically handicapped and homebound, people who are hearing impaired and any elderly/homebound people. The information would include news, weather, community events, information on rehabilitation and other available services, important telephone numbers, health tips, human interest stories, etc.

Possible Formats and Content

* Magazine format programmes for and about people with disabilities. As previously mentioned, many countries have been producing such programmes for quite a few years now. Examples include:
-LINK Productions/CENTRAL Independent TV, U.K. – a weekly programme hosted by two disabled and one non-disabled person covering a wide range of topics relating to disability and of particular interest to people with disabilities and their families.
-BBC, U.K. – Produces a programme similar to LINK and also has periodic programmes for children who are disabled.
-Germany – Again, a production similar to that above, also hosted by a man who is an actor and is disabled.

N.B. In all of the above, people with disabilities are part of the production staff.

India - the Central Institute of Educational Technology in India is producing a series of tv programmes to train teachers on working with children who are disabled. It is like a simple Open University course. They also produce television shows FOR children, many of them on topics relating to disability and health.

* Programmes specific to one disability. Examples from the U.S. include:

-Project VITAL - this is a television training and talk show for people with developmental disabilities, particularly the mentally handicapped. It is a 30 minute monthly show, primarily on the accomplishments of people with developmental disabilities - all the productions are made by people with disabilities themselves, ensuring that the topics and content are of interest and appropriate to them WHILE simultaneously providing them with the training in various aspects of video production. The work is coordinated and managed by a special education teacher and a tv producer.

-Special education programmes for people with mental handicaps. Research has established that people who are Mentally Handicapped generally watch a lot of tv and that tv modelling CAN be very effective, especially for social skills, self-image, activities of daily living, etc. Included in experimental productions for U.S. cable have been goal oriented programmes based on skits, stories, games, songs, exercise - some followed up with teachers in special education schools.

-Deaf Mosaic - Part of Gallaudet University - Deaf and hearing people work together on productions for or about deafness. They use a PM Magazine format which includes 4 to 6 stories in each half hour and then is distributed to the Discovery Cable Channel. The production team includes both university students and tv professionals - the students get trained for the work force and the professionals get "experience" with people who are hearing impaired. Their programmes are also captioned, use sign language along with voice-overs.

-Silent Network - an award-winning production company which produces programmes for people who are deaf and hearing impaired and also are designed to entertain those who hear as well. They use sign, captions and voice. Programmes include a very successful course on sign language (for hearing an deaf people), a talk show with a deaf host, an entertainment combining theatre/dance/mime/sign, an award winning children's show, aerobics with sign, music videos with sign, etc.

-Beyond Sound - programmes in American Sign Language, primarily for people who are deaf or hearing impaired. They all include a voice narration and captioning. Productions include a half-hour weekly news show, half-hour interview show, narrated performances by the acclaimed National Theatre of the Deaf, documentaries on local activities, etc.

-Pakistan is in its third year of producing a 10 minute sign language programme nightly as well as a 15 minute weekly special which covers news and community events. They have also produced a number of Public Service Announcements (API's) for and about children who are disabled, along with special documentaries.

N.B. Barbara Kolucki is in contact with most of the production companies listed above and many have indicated a willingness to discuss arrangements with Hong Kong for cable broadcast use of some of their programmes.

Specific Production Ideas

* Specific training skills programmes - might include vocational rehabilitation skills training for a specific disability group, a programme/series for parents of infants with disabilities, training for regular classroom teachers on how to work with and integrate children who are disabled into their classrooms, etc. (There are examples from other countries which could be obtained and used as models).
* Programmes for the general public which would help bring about attitude change. Of special interest might be programmes for children about other children who are disabled. (Examples of productions from outside Hong Kong are available for screening).
* Entertainment programmes specifically by local people who are disabled, either alone or integrated with non-disabled people. Examples include plays performed by the Hong Kong Federation of Handicapped Youth and directed by Ko Tin Lung, theatre performances by persons who are deaf from the Hong Kong Theatre of the Deaf, performances by any of the artists who participated in the Festival of Arts with the Disabled and The Talent Quest produced by TV-B, etc.
* A course in sign language, either for children or adults.
* An exercise programme that includes adaptations for people who are disabled, e.g. using wheelchairs, for parents with young handicapped children, etc.
* A puppet programme for all children, with puppets who are disabled and not, conveying practical information about children with various disabilities.
* Selected ETV programmes which would be re-broadcast on cable and either use captions, sign language or a special audio track to assist children who are disabled.
* Programmes specific to Hong Kong's model of Community-Based Rehabilitation - Dr. Fang and the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation coordinate this project with the assistance of the World Health Organization. Hong Kong is a forerunner in the urban model of Community-Based Rehabilitation.

Again, the COMPERE Committee can provide further assistance where needed. If you or your production teams are interested in viewing some cassettes, this can also be arranged.

Thank you and our best wishes for your success.

Television Magazine Format Series

As previously mentioned, the idea for this series was formative. The COMPERE Committees were made aware that other countries were doing such programs. A few of the members had attended media conferences/seminars in other countries and I continually fed international information to the groups. In addition, while preparing information for the Cable Groups, the Commissioner and other members realized that the time was right to again approach people who were producing for commercial stations. The advocacy and advise process was comprised of the following steps:

1 The Commissioner for Rehabilitation convinced Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) to be responsible for production of the series. He simultaneously obtained the necessary funding for the project.

2 Members of the Committees were asked to comment/advise on proposed types and formats of programs along with relevant resources.

3 A request that I provide a package of disability resource information for production teams, including sensitively presented printed material on children and adults with disabilities, personal stories/books, guidelines relevant to the media and research on attitude change and the media.

4 We also provided production teams with video cassettes of documentaries, dramas, magazine format shows and "regular" programming that sensitively included children or adults with disabilities from around the world.

5 Regular meetings were held to view "rough cuts" and scripts prior to production.

6 The following 12 episodes were broadcast between September and November of 1988. Both Chinese language stations aired the series.

INTEGRATION • PREVENTION OF DISABILITIES
MEDICAL SERVICES • SPECIAL EDUCATION
VOCATIONAL TRAINING • EMPLOYMENT
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE • ACCESS AND TRANSPORT
SPORTS AND RECREATION • OUTSTANDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
FAMILIES OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES
INFORMATION FOR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

There has been quite positive feedback about the series. The only major "criticism" has been that too much information was packed into each program–not the worst comment that could be made at all!

Commenting as a quasi "outside observer", I found that this process of the COMPERE Committees working closely with the production teams went exceptionally well. Much of the tribute goes to the then Commissioner for Rehabilitation and the good working relationship he established from the beginning. In addition, the Division Officers at the Hong Kong Council of Social Work are not only talented and resourceful but totally convinced and supportive of the potential of using media to educate the public. The results represent the combined efforts of everyone. On both sides–the media and rehabilitation–people were open, willing and dedicated to the true spirit of the series.

Producing An Award-Winning Public Service Announcement

The Government COMPERE Committee's early emphasis was to produce public education material on integration of people with disabilities. The Government Information Services was asked to produce a short Public Service Announcement (PSA) called an Announcement of Public Interest (API) in Hong Kong, both in Chinese and English. As a matter of fact, two ads were produced–one on the integration of children and the other on adults. The scenarios were as follows:

1 Children's PSA. A group of children with/without disabilities were taken to a local park that had slides, trampolines, and swings. The visuals were simply the children playing ACTIVELY. At the very end the voice-over says "When it comes to friendship, a disability is no handicap" as the children petted some animals together.

2 Adult PSA. Here we see two families (each with mother, father and child) visiting. They talk, eat and the women are showing the clothes that they made for the children. At the end of the PSA we hear the same voice-over as above and we see one family leave and wave good-bye at the door–and the camera for the first time shows that one woman uses a wheelchair.

After the decision was made to produce these PSA's, the Committee defined the conceptual approach it wished to portray: that the children and adults were to be projected as ACTIVE, PARTICIPATING, NURTURING and ADAPTING. The Committee hoped to work as closely as possible with the production team, having had a few "bad" experiences in the past where an idea/treatment was given to them and the result was less than the Committee hoped with regard to sensitivity or accuracy about people with disabilities. A number of suggestions were made and the highly successful process included:

a. At the briefing meetings reference material was given to the production team including the U.N. Guidelines on "Improving Communications about People with Disabilities" and other local as well as international handouts.

b. We met with the writer, producer and other members of the production team to screen a variety of television segments from the U.S. and other countries. Of particular importance to the Committee was that the children being portrayed not be seen as sick or inactive. The team viewed segments from SESAME STREET and from other shows where children with disabilities were part of the cast.

c. The writer and producer stayed in close touch with the Commissioner for Rehabilitation and other Committee members during the production process.

The result of this comprehensive process was that the children's PSA won a first prize award in 1984 at the Film Festival of the Rehabilitation International Congress in Portugal.

Additional Materials

Both COMPERE Committees helped with the research, resources and pre-production of a radio series in Chinese about disability. Also, for almost a year, one of the local English language radio stations had a weekly call-in program which had a host who was blind.

Some print materials that were produced were:

a. The first brochure (see right &below) on Employment, presenting people with disabilities speaking about their work. It was also the first time that actual employers were interviewed and used to present a message to the public.

b. A second brochure currently being printed is based on a series of pamphlets produced a few years back by the National Easter Seal Society in the U.S. on "Myths and Facts about Disability". It is also a landmark brochure for Hong Kong in that it is the first time that humor is used in a Public Education Message.

The COMPERE Committees, individuals in rehabilitation and in the media, have come a long way with regard to the variety of ways that they are using media for and about people with disabilities. Stereotypic beliefs about "what can be done here" have been realistically and positively faced, risks have been taken and slowly, as happens everywhere; more creative uses of the media are being tried–and many of them are succeeding.

CHILDREN'S MEDIA WORKSHOP, Hong Kong

Some years ago, the host of a local English language children's show left the program because of a situation involving children's safety, and she, as a parent and television personality, could not justify the activity. This happened around the same time that some local people formed a group similar to the U.S. based Action for Children's Television (ACT). They formed the Television Advisory Group (TAG) and tried to bring about some awareness regarding the lack of good, high quality children's programming in Hong Kong, programs that were educationally sound as well as entertaining. This Consultant was part of TAG and provided that group with background material on work at SESAME STREET and other international children's shows. Both of these activities were the springboard for what is now called the Children's Media Workshop, led by the same host mentioned above, producer Libby Doyle.

The Children's Media Workshop (CMW) is currently (1989) producing a pilot for a television series for children in both Cantonese and English. The pilot will be used to raise funds for the entire series. The programs will concentrate on self-esteem and conservation issues–areas that were suggested as priority topics by a Focus Group of Hong Kong Experts.

Ms. Doyle organized a course at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts on Children's Television and I served as one of the main lecturers. Topics covered included the qualities of good educational programming for pre-school and school aged children, the importance of formative research in production, the critical analysis of international children's programs, adaptations for different cultures (and specifically those needed in a unique cross-cultural setting such as Hong Kong). **An important part of all of the lectures was the integration of children and adults with disabilities as part of the regular program.**

In the Students' Production at the Academy, one of the puppets developed used a wheelchair. The students also learned about working with children who are disabled on a television set, "shooting" them on location and the questions that could be and often need to be asked by other children–and adults.

The preparations are now being made for the pilot for the series. The same advocacy work will be done with the producers, writers and cast. They will screen others' work, learn about mistakes and successes over the years working in Children's Television **and then** they will adapt and come up with their own ideas, storylines and characters that **meet the needs of the children of Hong Kong.**

If the series is funded, there is no doubt children and adults with disabilities will continue to be a part of the Hong Kong television scene.

INDIA

My ongoing work and relationship with India began in 1985 and continues to the present. Of all the media work done in Asia, it has been the most intensive in terms of periods of time spent living there, intimacy developed with people working and living there, the variety of projects and travel throughout the country. Having said this–as anyone who has spent time in India knows–the country and its diversity is so vast that one can know only a little bit about a small number of aspects–and learns more during each return visit. The ideas and habits that seemed so "foreign" or material goods which seemed so minimal have begun to seem "normal", and as I travel and spend time in more remote places, the "bare basics" begin to seem almost luxurious.

Thus far, there have been three major media missions to India: two have been part of the UNICEF/Rehabilitation International Technical Assistance Program. One six month Mission was with UNDP/UNESCO, working solely with Children's Television. What follows is the chronological development of my work in India.

UNICEF Consultancy November – December 1985

This first Mission was designed to support the current UNICEF country program in the areas of **educational media** and **integrated education.** Specifically, the aim was to take the topic of childhood disability–its prevention, early detection, rehabilitation and the area of public attitudes–and examine how it fit into the countries' media activities, particularly via Educational Television. The major tasks undertaken in this two month period included:

1 assisting in the planning and conducting of three Workshops designed to stimulate awareness and increased activity in productions for children with disabilities and/or integration of children with and without disabilities. One was based with the Central Institute for Educational Technology (CIET), one with the Development Education Research Organization of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and one was sponsored by the National Institute for the Hearing Impaired (NIHH).

2 assisting UNICEF in reviewing films under production and previously produced with regard to improved presentation and finalization.

3 conducting a series of orientation sessions and in-house UNICEF Workshops on "Media and People with Disabilities."

4 advising and consulting with UNICEF Staff on the ways and means of improving/increasing media support for advocacy and training in education and prevention of childhood disability, as well as community-based rehabilitation (CBR) work.

Considerable time in the first few weeks was spent learning–listening, reading, observing. India has a wealth of resources with regard to traditional media as well as films and audio-visual materials. It also has a history of active voluntary agencies working with/for children and adults with disabilities. Though much of the media and the services are not within reach of the majority of people who need it, nonetheless the Government, Non-Government Organizations and International Aid Agencies do provide a variety of programs. Some basic observations made in this initial period helped with carrying out the goals of this Mission including:

1 The potential for Educational Television was increasing. There was satellite transmission time available to reach an estimated 70-80% of the area where children are living in India. This does not, however, imply widespread satellite reception or availability of hardware. In addition, software (actual programming to meet the local needs of people, especially in the villages) was sorely needed.

2 As previously mentioned, most children with disabilities are not within reach of existing services. A related issue is that many disabilities (both those that are preventable and those which are not preventable at present) are and will be present for some time. This means that any media products must be multi-faceted, and must:

a. meet some of the needs of children who are disabled and their families without relying on outside help and support. What could the media teach them that they could actually use in their lives today? A community-based rehabilitation approach should be used.

b. sensitize and raise the awareness of non-disabled people.

Again, the media should give people practical information about what they could/would do when interacting with a person who is disabled.

c. address the issue of prevention for mass audiences as well as those where specific disabilities are endemic.

3 Most of the media materials that were developed on these topics so far were developed for adults. If the Educational Television (ETV) potential was to be utilized, people would have to be trained with regard to accurate, sensitive, educational tv programming for children on the topics of disability, health, and attitudes.

Workshop with the Central Institute for Educational Technology (CIET)

UNICEF in India supports the Central Institute for Educational Technology (CIET) which was created in 1984 in response to the fast expanding program potential offered through the satellite INSAT 1B for educational television. UNICEF has sponsored workshops and training over the years for the production and management staff.

I organized and conducted a six day Production Workshop with a group of producers, directors, writers, technical staff, actors and graphics/design staff. The participants worked on a "model production"–from conception of the idea for the half-hour show to final editing.

The Training Process began with a day-long workshop prior to production. It included:

1 Presentations on the qualities of good educational television for children.

2 Viewing and discussions of an international selection of television programs dealing with various aspects of disability via television.

3 Personal and playful experience with children–disabled and not–with and without camera equipment.

To illustrate, most of the crew had never had personal experience playing with or filming children with disabilities. The first few hours were a little "stiff". Children, disabled and not, were taken to a "junk playground"–made of tires, bullock carts, wheels, electrical spools, etc. The children played on their own and the crew began to shoot the children at play. Looking at what they shot, one could see a lot of "zooming in" on a leg brace here, a hearing aid there, a child's disfigured eyes.

What was then stressed to all was that our goal was to show **children being children.** Whether one shot the hearing aid or brace was not as important as getting the children's smiles, interactions with one another, and reactions.

Slowly, on a particular day, the results definitely became visible. The children "broke the ice". Different crew members "found" favorites, started playing with the children, came up with ways that games could be adapted to include children who were disabled–and what they subsequently filmed was completely different from what they were filming the first few hours.

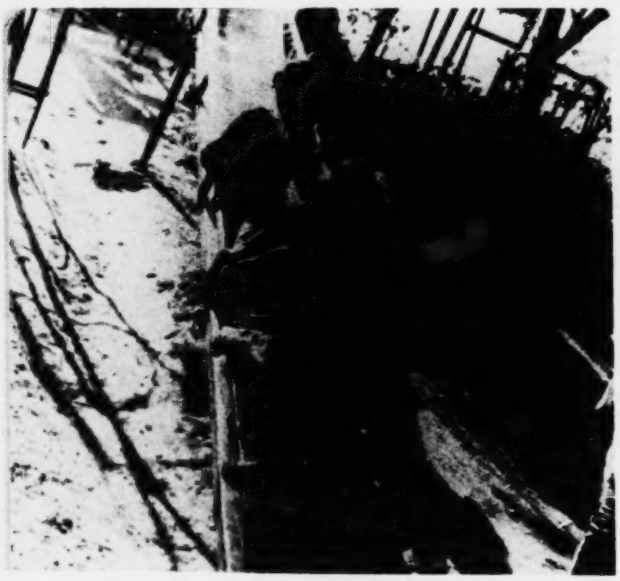
During the rest of the week the actual production took place. The program designed was about "A Clock", or the concept of "Time". Segments included:

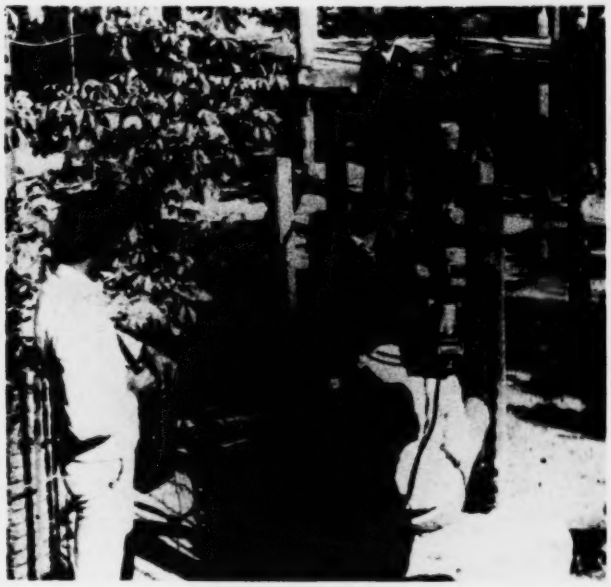
- a scene with a rooster
- a song about clocks sung by the presenter and children
- a film about different types of clocks in a clock shop
- children making a clock with various times while lying on the ground and their bodies forming the clock and hands
- children making clocks in an arts & crafts project
- a mime acting out a story about time
- a story about a tortoise and hare
- another song about time sung by a group of local musicians and the children

In each of the segments, children with disabilities were included naturally: no mention was made of disability because it was not part of the goal for the show. But, they were included in the following ways:

- when songs were sung, the children who were deaf sat next to a musician who had an instrument and he/she "felt" the music/rhythm in an active way
- children with physical disabilities (the boys we used had crutches and braces) were also included in any of the physical activities–as hands of the clock, (if they wanted to be–it was always their choice)
- a child who was a bit older led the child who was blind in some of the activities and prompted him to, for example, feel the tortoise and hare puppets

The experience and **process** of the week workshop was more important than the quality of the production itself–although the CIET Staff liked the program. Looking at life (and television) from a child's point of view and then naturally and sensitively including children with disabilities into tv programs for children were the more important goals. At the end of the week, further brainstorming sessions on topics specifically relating to prevention of disability, health and nutrition took place.





Workshop with the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)

I also helped with a three day Workshop held at ISRO on the topic of "Production of Television Programs for Women and Children", giving an in-depth presentation of International Children's Programs. Screening and discussion of a variety of programs on the topic of children and adults with disabilities took place. A brainstorming session was held on what was/was not appropriate to the Indian situation. Some highlights of discussions were:

- Television, in India and elsewhere, has proven to hold tremendous potential as a medium for educating children about a wide range of subjects including health, nutrition, literacy skills and affective behavior.

- In the Indian setting, television can provide an effective and far-reaching support to the existing education system. For some children, television programs may help to supplement what has already been learned at school. Most children in India, however, have little or no access to educational facilities. For these children, television can serve particularly important functions: develop literacy skills, stimulate intellectual development by exposing them to a wide range of new situations, events and ideas. While this is a goal, one must also keep in mind that most of these children, today, do not have access to working television sets.

- Media can also be developed and utilized for people involved in child-rearing. Child-related programs can contribute towards improving the quality of child-rearing practices, especially in families and communities with children who are disabled.

- In all of the above mentioned instances–regional, state, language, religious and other differences need to be taken into account.

Workshop on Childhood Disability, National Institute for the Hearing Impaired (NIHH)

A three day Workshop was held in Bombay at NIHH to discuss ways of using media most effectively to highlight various aspects of childhood disability. The participants in the Workshop were representatives of voluntary agencies working in various aspects of rehabilitation, national resource centers, filmakers and producers. The objectives of the Workshop were: to expose participants to a number of films, television excerpts and audio-visual modules produced in India and other countries, along with the methodology and process involved in both production and feedback; and to identify the major content areas in prevention, intervention by families and integration in the community (with primary focus on early childhood), and the process and methodology to be followed for audience research, pre-testing, and field testing.

Many media materials were viewed and critiqued by the group. Though the viewing of media material is discussed throughout this report in the context of my work in each country, a brief discussion follows on the PROCESS used when evaluating media products.

In evaluating, one needs to look critically at both production quality and the content. It is of paramount importance to remember that quality does not always mean expensive budgets or sophistication.

The UN Guidelines on "Improving Communications for People with Disabilities" are as relevant today as when they were printed in 1982. Some of the most important qualities to look for are:

- children and adults with disabilities speaking for themselves whenever possible
- humor, curiosity and awkwardness depicted as normal, human qualities
- practical, helpful information should be provided to the viewer

These qualities are important in media products, whether the country is developing or highly industrialized. The reality is, however, that in many countries such as India, most of what has been produced thus far have been documentaries about services, and in some cases, about individuals. Therefore, some of the discussion points raised when viewing the material at the NIHH Workshop included:

- If we want to have a greater impact on more people, we should strive to integrate our messages and stories into as many existing media products as possible.
- Our medical and rehabilitation services are important, but if that is all that the general audience sees, the perception that all people with disabilities are "sick" will continue. Whenever possible show family life, community involvement and recreational activities.
- The tone and quality of our voice-overs and dialogue can determine the impression our product makes. A preachy, usually male authoritarian sounding voice can be more intimidating than a conversational, colloquial tone.
- As specialists working in rehabilitation, when we produce a media product, there is a lot of information that we want to include. Yet, it is often better and more effective to decide which is the most important message that will have practical value to as many people as possible. Many media theorists use the following maxim for getting a message across and ensuring that the audience will remember it: "Tell people what you are going to tell them. Then tell them what you told them".

- Whenever possible, integrate a "message" into a story-line. A first or even second person account is more effective than a narrative about a product, a service or even about a person.
- Try to think of the questions that might come up during and after watching your product. Can you answer them–perhaps even directly addressing the audience in a "personal" way?
- Try to think "Multi-Media". Choose the most important message and then develop it into a children's program for radio, a slide-show for adults, a tv drama, a poster, a traditional puppet show, etc.
- Even "training modules" should strive to be as entertaining as possible. Again, even if it is technical information, imbed it into a story whenever possible.

The discussions were lively and we learned why often dissatisfaction with a media product developed. It had nothing to do with creativity or lack of hard work. In many countries, communications materials were commissioned or developed by people working in rehabilitation who knew little or nothing about media. They could be easily intimidated by media professionals; they often were not specific about what message they wanted to convey; they often had time only to brief media people and leave the rest up to them. Most of the media people never had any personal experience with children or adults with disabilities; they were handed a huge pile of written material and then were expected to produce a product; they often didn't appreciate suggestions or interference once the production process began.

People were then divided into discussion groups. Guidelines for future productions, how better cooperation could be achieved between media staff and those working in rehabilitation and, some of the most important misconceptions about people with disabilities that were "blocking" messages from getting across were some of the topics discussed.

An excellent, lively booklet was produced and published by the sponsors of the Workshop. It is a very good model for other countries/groups to follow and adapt to their local needs. It is as appropriate in parts for a sophisticated, Western country as it is for a country in developing parts of the world with little experience in this area. Below are some of the Highlights from the Booklet:

- A realistic picture must be presented of the disability, and the results to be expected from treatments/rehabilitation available. Promises of dramatic cures can only lead to disappointment for most people. Acknowledging people's needs and the importance of putting "one's faith in God" needs to be balanced with a practical approach.
- Don't take the audience's interest for granted–even if you have a "captive audience", that's no excuse to bore them.
- Parents, family members and community workers need to be motivated as well as trained to work with children with disabilities. The best vehicles we can use are simple, interesting media products that are culturally appropriate and commensurate with the literacy skills of the community. A

Organised by:

AYJNIHH

Ali Yavar Jung National Institute
for the Hearing Handicapped
Kishenchand Marg,
Bandra Reclamation,
Bandra (West)
Bombay-400 050.

community-based rehabilitation approach is the most practical today.

- Dismissing established beliefs or traditions, no matter how erroneous, is likely to be unproductive. Respect them and use them as a bridge whenever possible while using first person accounts, or "testimonies" from people who have benefitted from "scientific" methods of rehabilitation.
- When briefing media producers, prepare a single sheet outlining **the most important** points–main message, currently held attitudes, what you would like the audience to absorb and finally, the "attitude/feeling/philosophy" that you would like to portray.
- Use people with disabilities as consultants, advisors, resources,etc. whenever possible. A media producer spending time with children or adults with disabilities can teach as much as a pile of wonderful reading material.

Childhood Disability and the Media

A WORKSHOP REPORT

November 29 — December 1, 1984

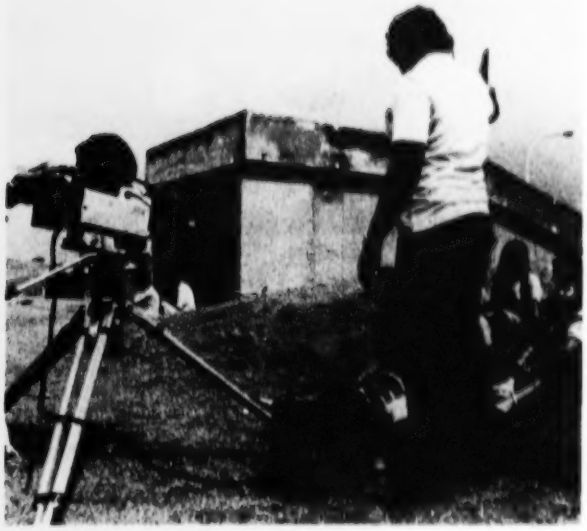
UNDP/UNESCO CONSULTANCY October 1986 –April 1987

During the time I served as the UNESCO appointed Educational Television Consultant with the Central Institute of Educational Technology, I was closely involved in all aspects of program production including script development, actual production/shooting, research and training. Specifics included:

1 working closely with scriptwriter and producers in the development of scripts. Integral to this was training and encouragement of the writers and producers in awareness of the needs of the target audience of children, particularly children living in rural areas of India. This meant that as much time as possible was spent WITH children–observing them, observing them watching television, asking them questions. Children with disabilities were included as often as possible, and were certainly discussed in training sessions and when talking with non-disabled children.

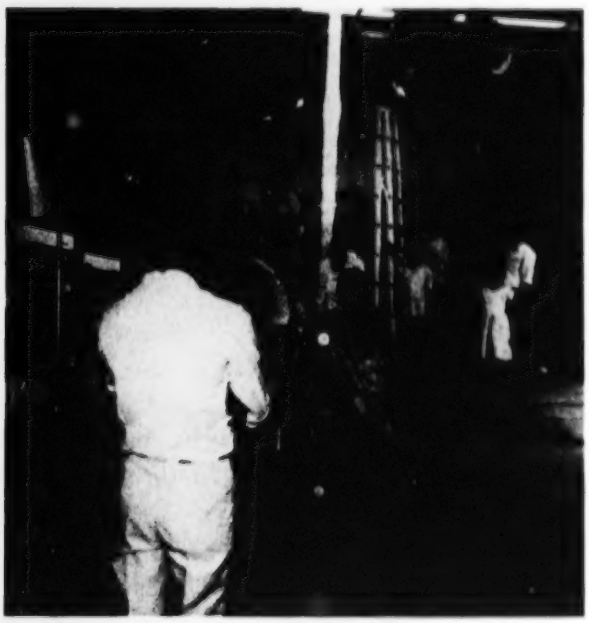
2 assistance with curriculum development– but as important–the encouragement to try **new, creative** Educational Television **formats** that blend education with entertainment. An important point to stress here is that the encouragement to **try** and experiment was contingent on the writers and producers (as well as the Consultant) having the confidence to take risks–to fail as well as to succeed. It was successful, in large part, because of the inspiration, enthusiasm and care emanating from the group.

3 involvement and consultation on all aspects of production–the planning process, research, pre-production site visits (recce), graphic/set design, location or studio shooting, editing. There were numerous difficulties relating to working conditions and unforseen circumstances–and all of these had to be dealt with–ranging from electrical blackouts, lack of adequate equipment or malfunctions of existing equipment, bureaucracy, and



budgets. Recognizing this, one's **attitude** was all important–accepting reality as is and yet **being excited, dedicated** and managing to retain this enthusiasm while working toward the goals.

4 My role would be as "formative" and "grassroots" as possible. This meant that there would be very few lectures as such–that learning would take place in small groups and by direct involvement throughout the production **process.** This informal approach allowed us to get to know each other's talents and skills. There were, however, weekly screening sessions of an international selection of children's television and many of them focused on some aspect of disability. The CIET Staff, therefore, received information about children and adults with disabilities informally.



5 Bi-weekly memos sent to the staff about some aspect of Children's Television. The topics covered were based on expressed or observed needs of the staff–sometimes they were written on a topic that was important to producers at the time (e.g. arts, science or health); other times they focused on different television formats or techniques that might make a program for children either more educational or more entertaining. And still other times they were about research done in India or abroad on some aspect of ETV.

What is important to point out here is that in each of these memos, regardless of the topic, some integration and reference was made to children with disabilities. It was hoped that the PROCESS of providing information about disability in both subtle and very explicit ways would help the Production Staff to look at and think about the topic in a natural, integrated way. Some examples include:

- In overall memos about television for children, the staff was encouraged to include children with disabilities **as part of** regular productions. When using a group of children, try to find one or two with any type of disability–hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disability or mental retardation.

- In a memo about "tv and the arts" that included dozens of ideas, suggestions were made about including segments where children and adults with disabilities show non-disabled children how they feel and use art in their lives. For example, they could "feel" a sculpture. The artists could observe the children or adults with disabilities and possibly explain their work in new or different ways. Or, dancers who are deaf could demonstrate how they feel the vibrations of the music and through this, know how and when to move. (In Bombay, a well-known dan-

cer has trained children who are deaf and who have other disabilities in traditional Indian dances–very successfully and professionally). Sign language is very artistic and research done for **Sesame Street** showed that viewing children (as well as children on the actual set) were fascinated and almost always tried to imitate the signing.

- In a memo about assisting in children's "developmental thinking", that is, believing in the power they have to change little and big things within their lives or community, many **child-to-child activities** were suggested that could be developed into tv scripts.
  - children could organize a "survey" of all children who are/are not immunized in their village. Develop a story and model the activity that shows how the information is collected and recorded. Children could sit together and record them discussing some of the activities/solutions that they come up with to encourage more participation in immunizations activities.
  - stories could be produced on a variety of other topics–*Why are there so many accidents in our village?; What could be done to prevent these accidents?; What kind of accidents happen most often–burns, wounds, falling from trees, road accidents, etc.?* The target audience of viewers could then watch a play that children act in that is designed to teach the community about safety and accident prevention. They can also learn about *what to do if/when an accident happens*–ranging from putting a burn in cool water to taking someone to the Health Center to learning how to make a simple crutch to help someone walk.
  - Children could learn about maps by making a "health map" of their community. They can play games such as "Snakes and Ladders" (also known as "Chutes and Ladders") on the topic. They can mark their maps with healthy/unhealthy places, safe/unsafe places, community resources–the game can be played with a LARGE playing board with the childrens' bodies as markers–to make the game more visible and interesting to the tv viewers.
  - The viewing children can learn about the

importance of exercising and stimulating their younger brothers and sisters, particularly if they are slow or disabled. They should learn to do this by helping them to use their five senses. A first person story could be developed (see "I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE" under the Pakistan section). While teaching children to do this, also point out that the "play" of young babies (as well as their own play) is really learning.

- In a memo on science, the following suggestion was made for a script: A child in a family is physically disabled. Before his parents go away for a few days to a family wedding, they have to figure out a few "tricks" so that he can safely stay home and take care of his younger sister. They have to devise something that will help the child who is disabled to reach some objects that he needs that are normally out of his reach. The whole family "experiments", using science through several concepts like making simple pulleys. He may now be capable of "being in charge".

- In a memo on music, ideas are included about having some children who are deaf observe musicians playing various instruments. They can listen with residual hearing and feel the vibrations on the instrument. Some children can sing the song while others keep the rhythm with the music. A singer can place a child's hand on his/her throat and talk about the vibrations felt while singing.

There were two specific series being developed while I was at CIET that included a great deal of input and information about media and disability. One series was on Health and Nutrition. In this series for children, information was included about prevention as well as rehabilitation. For example, in a program on EYES, there was a puppet sequence on Vitamin A and its importance for healthy eyes and prevention of blindness; a segment on keeping eyes clean and well washed; a segment on the parts of the eye and what might go wrong when one has a problem. This same type of information in being included in the other programs in the series.

The other was a series for regular classroom teachers in rural areas–encouraging them and giving them some skills to include children with disabilities in their classrooms. The crew went to various States of India where there are quality educational programs for children with a variety of disabilities. The scriptwriter and crew spent a great deal of time viewing and re-viewing international videotapes, asking to read supplementary written material and discussing formats and approaches. They had begun the series prior to my arriving and had a close working relationship with a Special Education Professor who guided them. The excerpt on the following page from an Indian newspaper tells that, at least in the opinion of the writer, the team is doing a very good job.

Radio and TV review

How good are TV ads?

By Neel Batra

COMMENTING on TV advertisements in this column may perhaps be justified to the extent that significant amount of telecast time is devoted to these ads each day. More so, when the effect of an ad on viewers could, in one's view, be decidedly dangerous. One refers to an ad peddling a popular brand of noodles. The shortened form of this ad, seen recently, shows a grown up child slurping a noodle, that is ingesting it with an indrawn breath that would leave the trachea open at the time of sucking in the noodle. From one's not so scanty knowledge of what precautions must be observed when a child, or indeed even an adult, is eating, this method of ingesting not only a slippery noodle but any kind of food is fraught with grave consequences. For, a slightly stronger indrawn breath can lodge the piece of food, more so a slippery noodle, in the windpipe choking the eater sometimes with fatal results. The most tragic case one can cite in this connection is the death of the late Air Marshal S. Mukherjee, the first Indian Chief of Air Staff who was found choked to death on a piece of fish while eating normally in a Japanese restaurant.

This brings to the fore the question whether any or all kinds of ads should be permitted to be telecast irrespective of their contents? It is surprising that this particular ad should have been passed by the members of the Doordarshan screening committee. Granted that nobody has remarked on this aspect of the ad, now that the issue has been raised would the Doordarshan Authorities care to obtain the opinion of at least two medical experts?

It is rather disappointing to find a discussion panel setting out to tackle a format much wider than the title would suggest and then muffing it. One would point to the discussion on TV on Tuesday (May 19), which was to give its views on Arms Aid to Pakistan. Retired Major General D. K. Palit, the moderator, declared that they would discuss the matter not only how the did would affect India but also its ramifications in regional and international context. But for a casual reference to the fact that the United States was trying to find in Pakistan a substitute in the Middle East and South Asia region for the Shah of Iran, the panelists got bogged down merely in speculating how the aid would be used and how this would effect India. It is rather disappointing how almost always panelists on a defence discussion ignore the fact that India faces a twin threat, i.e. from Pakistan and China.

No Indian defence planner worth his salt would at anytime lose sight of this fact when considering India's defence preparedness individually vis-a-vis Pakistan or China. Ignoring the twin threat aspect always conveys the impression that India's re-armament and modernisation programme far exceeds its needs considered in relation either to China or Pakistan. But with the two countries taken together, our defence preparedness may seem grossly inadequate. Under such conditions no sensible commander would dare shift troops from one front to the other even if the need was very pressing. In this aspect, discussions on defence on either TV or Radio render a singular disservice to the audience by omitting to even hint at the task which faces Indian defence planners and international ramifications connected with the country's security. Erudite discourses on just one aspect will not make the programme meaningful. Besides Major General Palit, the two other panelists were Dr Raja Mohan from the Institute of Defence Studies and Salim Shervani, Member of Parliament.

The telecast on teaching and rehabilitation of the blind seen under the general title, Dishayen, on Wednesday (May 20) at 10.15 was clearly far superior to any film or TV programme that one has so far seen on the subject. Beautifully photographed and tastefully conceived and edited, in a short 30 minutes it covered almost the whole subject of training, teaching and inculcating self-confidence among blind children not only in special schools for the blind but preferably in integrated schools where the handicapped children study alongside normal ones. The veteran Devki Nandan Pandey gave just that bit of extra with his style to the elegantly worded, highly informative and simple commentary to make the programme an audio visual treat. It indeed showed the fast developing capabilities of Indian producers to take up such sad subjects as blindness and present them in a format which exudes nothing else than hope and compassionate optimism.

On AIR the discussion on President's Rule in Punjab heard on Sunday (May 17), went along predictable lines. Balwant Singh Ramoowalia condemned it, Mrs Amarjeet Kaur supported it, K. S. Rustomjee gave due credit to Mr Barnala for preventing communal riots and warned against police excesses and Mr V. D. Chopra as the moderator threw the ball in various panelists' courts. All were agreed that care should be taken not to arrest innocent people or persecute them. The Punjab Police Chief had already announced measures to prevent such excesses.

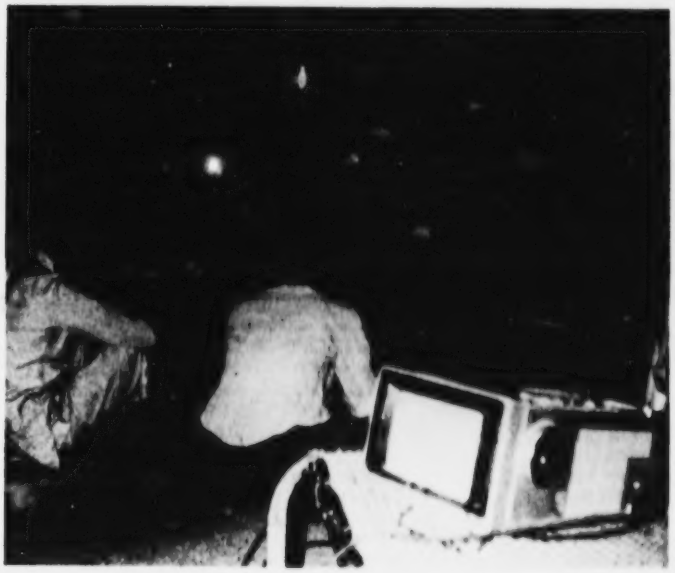
Hindustan Times
May 25, 1987

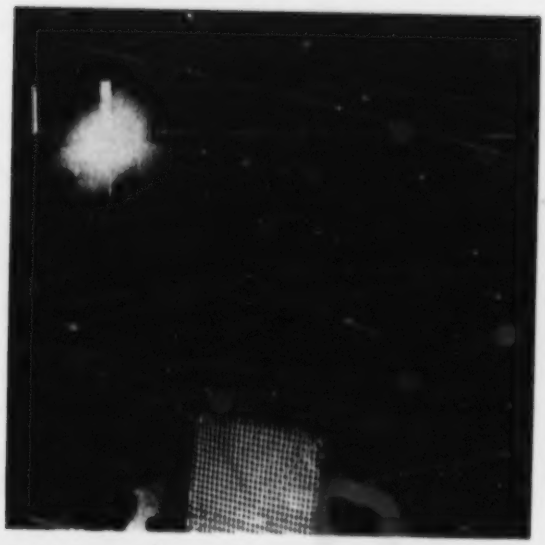
The other major activity which included, as a matter of course, information about disability was an **all India workshop on educational puppetry for tv for children** which the Consultant helped organize. Traditional and modern Puppeteers from various parts of India came to share their craft, unique skills and experiences with the staff at CIET. Included were glove, string, rod and leather puppets, as well as "muppets.""

The goal was to exchange experiences and discuss how this media could be best adapted to television for children in India. Of particular interest was gaining information about directing puppets on tv, sets for puppets, working with puppets and children together, scriptwriting, puppet making and manipulation. One of the Puppet Troupes specifically dealt with two aspects of childhood disability. The Group is called "Utsah" and is part of a demonstration project with an educational organization called CHETNA in Ahmedabad, India. The Puppeteer, Krina Patel, explained and demonstrated her two projects. The first is a puppet production called "People of this world" and is a play of four episodes, each dealing with a different disability. The aim is to create awareness about disability among non-disabled children. Each episode has two Puppet Characters, one disabled and one not. The Puppets are taken to schools and communities and at the present time, the feedback and research from the children is being coordinated. This was a wonderful opportunity for the CIET Staff to see a puppet with a disability and also to listen to very creative, culturally appropriate scripts.

The second "Utsah" project involves Ms. Patel taking a variety of puppets to schools for children with disabilities. She then conducts workshops in creative Drama and Puppetry with a small group of children and teachers. Thus far, she has worked in schools for children who are visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically disabled and mentally retarded. The CIET was quite interested in Ms. Patel's feedback about how the children respond to the Puppets, the questions they ask and how they are used to supplement the curriculum.

Another Puppeteer, Ms. Ranjina Pandey, also has worked for a number of years using puppets with students who are mentally retarded. She is a professional puppeteer and the mother of a beautiful child with Down Syndrome. As a parent helping out in the classroom, she decided to use her professional skills to assist the teachers in supplementing classroom work by using a medium that was of great interest to the students. Ms. Pandey discussed her work and the CIET Staff were quite interested in going out to observe her working with the children. This was set up a few weeks after the Puppet Workshop and Ms. Pandey, as well as her daughter and some of her friends, have been used in some CIET productions.





In conclusion, the six months at CIET was exceptionally productive. Again, the *process that everyone went through seems to be as important as any of the actual productions*. It was a time that was spent experimenting, learning and growing with a group of people who were very willing and anxious to experiment, learn and grow, particularly the producers and scriptwriter. It was also a time spent with many wonderful Indian children, disabled and not, who gave us numerous ideas which could then be shared with others.

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Though each of the Missions to India has been different, they have overlapped, in terms of some of the people as well as the activities involved. The progress and commitment in the area of media for or about people with disabilities has steadily grown.

In a joint work plan developed for 1988 by the Ministry of Welfare and UNICEF, one of the activities planned was a "Media Workshop". Recently a National Information and Documentation Centre on Disability and Rehabilitation was established by the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India. This Center is part of a pilot project called the District Rehabilitation Centre Scheme (DRC), where resource centers are built in rural areas of India, where about 80% of the population of people with disabilities live–and where very few services exist. A delivery system of a wide range of rehabilitation services is made possible, in most part, through mobile units. A key part of their work is Community Awareness as well as Training for caregivers of children with disabilities.

It was decided that two Workshops would be held for the following purposes:

1 One Workshop for officers working in the DRC's and the National Institutes for the Visually Handicapped, Hearing Handicapped, Mentally Handicapped and Physically Handicapped. Also included would be representatives from Voluntary Agencies and people working in the Media. The purpose of this Workshop would be to review work that has been done in the field and to develop Guidelines and Strategies for further communication efforts.

2 The second Workshop was for Policy Makers, Senior Officers of various Government Departments from the Ministries of Information and Broadcasting, Education, Health, Labour, Human Resource Developments. Staff from All-India Radio, Television and the Films Division were also invited. The purpose of this workshop was to Develop A Media Strategy–for setting up what would be the first ever "MEDIA CELL" within the Ministry of Welfare. However, this Cell would be aimed at coordination with and participation from other related Ministries to maximize the impact of using various media for and about people with disabilities. The Media Cell would be responsible not only for coordination of future productions but also for the dissemination of communication material on the subject of disability. A great deal of the production work, and the Workshops themselves, were sponsored by UNICEF in India.

I was asked to help organize and conduct both Workshops which included Presentations on various aspects of media for and about children/adults with disabilities; shared an international selection of video segments; reviewed and assessed dozens of tv programs and films suggesting various strategies for setting up the Media Cell and its accompanying inter-ministerial and inter-departmental collaboration.

What is important to point out is the great progress observed. Many of the films, PSA's and other materials were of superb quality in terms of production and content. Granted, there were still many that were being produced that were either negative or of little use to the "real target audience"–but this happens everywhere. Still, many more producers were becoming sensitized and interested **and** many more people with disabilities and their advocates were learning about, and effectively using media.

Also, important to note, was the interest and commitment of people working in top Government positions, particularly in the Ministry of Welfare, to public education about people with disabilities using the Media. The very fact that a "Media Cell" was conceived and is being developed is certainly a novel initiative for this area of the world, and one that could serve as a model for countries everywhere.

When viewing the various PSA's, films and other videotapes–some of the areas of progress included; people with disabilities speaking for themselves–there were businessmen with disabilities as well as homemakers and a few children; there were "ordinary" people with disabilities as well as "super-achievers"; there was an effort made to use traditional media (puppetry) and imbed into it messages about disability prevention and hearing impairments; there was a respect for rural, traditional beliefs along with more scientific information ("there is no magic"), children poking fun and someone explaining to them about "their new classmate".

There was also progress regarding services available, particularly about the National Institutes and DRC's. The participants all felt, however, that future productions would need to address the fact that still, many people–because of location, life-styles and many other reasons–cannot avail themselves of the services. The media products developed would have to share practical information with these people–information that they could USE today in their lives.

After viewing a selection of media presentations, some of the Highlights from the discussions at both Workshops included:

- Not all rehabiiitation work can be done by people in rehabilitation–similar to our experiences that all health work cannot be done solely by health workers. The best efforts are when one "piggybacks" on each other's work, particularly in reference to other Ministries and Departments. Rehabilitation information can be "piggybacked" and included in work done either by the Ministry of Health, Education or Information. One example given was some of the Public Education done in Hong Kong; a message about taxi drivers picking up pas-

sengers with disabilities produced by the combined efforts of people working in Transporation and Rehabilitation, or a message on vocational training produced with the cooperation of people working in Employment and Rehabilitation.

- Though media is increasingly available and important–one shouldn't produce for the sake of producing. One needs to use the time, money and other resources to benefit the greatest number of people possible. One also has to be careful about "media bombardment–sometimes with many giving conflicting messages". This happens everywhere, but especially true in a country such as India where a great number of the people have low media literacy skills. One wants to give accurate, sensitive messages delivered to people **in a manner that they can both understand and use immediately.**

- One possible consideration for India in its development of a Media Strategy is to create a vehicle similar to Hong Kong's Committee on Public Education in Rehabilitation (COMPERE). One outcome of this might be a **yearly focus** that could be coordinated by the Ministry of Welfare. This, of course, does not mean that media on other topics would not be developed. Rather, though, a media "explosion" on one topic would happen–using different media in different formats for different audiences.

- Some of the best media products are those that are **community/family-based,** rather than Institutional/service-based.

- As has been brought forward in every Workshop, it is of utmost importance to reach **children** with messages about disability. We need to do this for several reasons. One is that in reaching children today, we have the potential to prevent some of the negative stereotypic attitudes that we as adults have grown up with and have a hard time changing. Second, the "Child-to-Child" approach of children teaching other children–empowering themselves to bring about change–has been used effectively in the health field around the world. In a country such as India, older children are very often "in charge" of the care for their younger brothers and sisters. They can become empowered to help others–and help themselves–in areas like early identification of disabilities, infant stimulation exercises, and prevention.

- With regard specifically to documentaries, one should be clear about the reasons for choosing a documentary over another format; e.g. 1) to document for purposes of fundraising/public education, evaluation of progress or to use in training. 2) to give concrete, human examples which can be shared with others. For example, a documentary about the human elements of our programs can be shown to people working in the media whom we contract to do work for us–we are giving them ready-made **storylines.** For busy people in a topic area where they feel uncomfortable, this could be very efficient and effective.

- One of the best ways to prepare media staff who are asked to produce something is to show them examples, both good and bad, of other media that has been produced on the topic. Whenever possible, I show videotapes of work that I have been involved with, illustrating mistakes as well as successes. Just as I have learned a great deal from mistakes, it seems that people working in the media relate well to seeing what others have done, along with some critique from different points of view on its quality. Do we think it is a good story; why/why not? Is it produced sensitively? Accurately? Hopefully, the proposed "Media Cell" and Documentation Center will provide others with tapes that could serve this purpose, too.

- In evaluating some of the successes of various productions, many of the same qualities appear again and again. Most of them have been discussed elsewhere in this paper. But one that was particularly relevant to the Workshop participants was the importance of characters which the target audience can identify. In the development of our products, it is important for us to put ourselves in the place of the non-disabled children and adults who will be viewing, and then to develop characters that have the

same feelings, ask the same questions, and act in the same ways.

- Our best resource for reaching people always is people. Very simply, media should not try to compete with, but rather supplement, human contact and interaction. It should reflect what people **can do.** It should help them to better understand themselves, their interactions with children and adults who are disabled and, whenever possible, to given them options and power in their lives.

One of the approaches stressed for consideration by participants at both Workshops was the approach learned while working at the Children's Television Workshop. This was the "Community Education Services" Approach–that is, using the electronic media (television, cassette, tape) in conjunction with pre/during/post production personal contact. This approach is not new to India–it is being used by many–and one of the key resource people at Workshop 2, Mr. P.V. Krishnamurty, is practicing it in villages today using radio programs and discussions with child-care workers. However, it was discussed in the context of helping our audience to get the most out of our media products–no matter who the audience is or what format our productions are in. Pre-production research, pre-viewing and post-viewing activities, handout supplementary material–all maximize our impact.

There were, as per usual, many recommendations that came out of the Workshops. It was evident that many people are interested enough in the potential use of media that they will continue to expand their efforts. UNICEF will continue to support many projects and it is anticipated that I will return sometime during 1989.

What is the next step? Possible future directions include: more workshops in different States of India to reach more people; the production of some prototype material that can be developed into a "Multi-Media Resource Package" to be used by the Ministry's Media Cell; a series of leadership training workshops for people with disabilities who are interested in working directly with the media; or development of a strategy for reaching the "mainstream media", particularly, for example, children's tv producers or producers of night-time dramas.

PAKISTAN

My first mission to Pakistan was in January 1987 at the request of the Government of Pakistan and UNICEF. A five-year plan (1988-1992) between the Government and UNICEF had just been completed and an integral part of the plan was the **"Enhancement of Public Awareness on Childhood Disabilities"**. The project involved UNICEF's support regarding the "extension of awareness and information with regard to prevention, early detection and rehabilitation through the home and community". Implicit in the project was the goal to help change the attitudes of the public from those of fear and pity to one of greater acceptance of people with disabilities as individuals with skills and abilities to offer to both community and national development.

The "Terms of Reference" for the first mission included an assessment of media materials which already existed for and about children who are disabled in Pakistan and the development of recommendations regarding future work in this area.

It was a time for learning as much as consulting. Recommendations had to be given in the context of the country, its culture, religion, infrastructure, already existing resources, etc. Previous work– mistakes as well as successes–working for SESAME STREET and in Hong Kong were extremely helpful. In addition, the time spent in India provided a perspective of the Southeast Asian Sub-Continent, particularly its rich diversity of culture and experience. The Urdu language is in many ways similar to the Hindi/Hindustani spoken in parts of India; the food, dress and many customs were also similar, yet with some very distinctive differences. Again, wearing "local clothes" was not only comfortable and enjoyable but helped one to "look and feel" much more **a part of** the community, particularly when visiting the villages.

The review and assessment of materials and resources took place at meetings at UNICEF, the recently established Department of Special Education, the Allama Iqbal Open University (which was setting up a program for the development of special education materials), Pakistan Television and Radio and, the Lok Virsa Museum of Cultural Heritage which had an abundance of information on the folk traditions of Pakistan. Orientation Workshops were held at most places–advocacy messages about what has been done in other countries with regard to media and children with disabilities and discussions about what might be adapted here. All sessions required a lot of listening: receiving details about current work, future plans, reviewing cassettes, learning about available "traditional media" as well as the newer electronic media.

Though great strides had been made in the previous few years by the Department of Special Education, and though UNICEF had quite a bit of well-prepared material on the Prevention of Childhood Disability, very little dealt with issues such as early detection, parenting, community-based rehabilitation, special education, integration and attitudes. The lack however, was not surprising. The skills, equipment and support system (infrastrcture) for media development had been absent until recently. It was logical to address other needs where people had more experience and expertise. I had been invited to help others to decide what now COULD be done to help improve the QUALITY of life for children and adults with disabilities and their families using the existing media.

Together, we decided to undertake the development of some in-house expertise at UNICEF, a series of workshops in the area of media and rehabilitation, and a specific plan of action for the production of "model" media materials by the Directorate General of Special Education with assistance from UNICEF and encouragement of Pakistan Television (PTV) to include issues about and for children with disabilities into their regular programming.

Before my return a year later, the Government of Pakistan and UNICEF determined **what was best for them** and how they could utilize my skills. A mission for two months was set up with the Terms of Reference as follows:

1 To review, as available, television programs, radio programs and other related materials that had been produced over the year by Pakistan Televison, Radio, the Open University, other Government Agencies and Non-Government Agencies (the Voluntary Sector).

2 To review ongoing Pakistan Television and to suggest specific ways to integrate issues relating to disability into regular programming.

3 Organize a two day Workshop on "Media and People with Disabilities" to be held for the first time in Pakistan.

4 Develop up to two Public Service Ads for television and other prototype material, and suggest how additional materials could be developed.

5 To recommend the steps which need to be taken to operationalize the development of "information packages" as outlined in the 5 year plan on "Enhancement of Public Awareness about Childhood Disabilities".

6 To organize a two three-day Workshop for UNICEF Staff on "Media Production for and about Children".

What was accomplished is difficult to measure. But what is important is that the accomplishments in a mission like this, where so much is groundbreaking or "prototype" work, need to be measured **as much by the process** as the **products.**

For example, it would be the first time such a Workshop would be held in the country. It would also be the first time the production crew and photographer would be working on such a project. Ideas would have to be tested, tried and disgarded as necessary. Flexibility would have to be maintained–at all costs.

During the first week, tentative agendas and time-schedules were drawn up–for shooting the PSA's and for work that needed to be done by all parties concerned. A great deal had to be planned, and worked on, simultaneously. The following discussions are listed in the order of time devoted–both to the process and the actual activity.

Production of Public Service Announcements

This project really needs to be separated into two parts: the **process** of filming and photographing children in Peshawar and the actual **production** of the PSA's and the protoptypes for a photography project.

First Steps

In the "process", a very important part of the objective was to sensitize the video team regarding how to film children with disabilities in a positive, sensitive way. They were briefed numerous times about the objectives and the philosophy or "feel" that we wanted to portray. We did not want this to be a little documentary about the children–it **had** to be more personal. Discussions were held regarding ways/camera angles/situations to shoot, the process of allowing the children to "direct"the filming and the importance of catching children at play and at ease. A great deal of this had to be done by **example**–one had to be willing to get down on the ground and play with the children, to make the crew or teachers feel comfortable and capable, to handle mistakes in a gentle way. In all of this work, I was was very fortunate to have one member of the UNICEF Staff, filmaker, Ms. Rina Gill, accompany me and direct the "shooting". She speaks Urdu, learns quickly, and works extremely well with others.

Content

How did we decide what would be the content of the PSA's? The answer came–as some of the best answers often come–from children. In the beginning, two days were spent in Peshawar, where the shooting was to take place. The two day research visit was spent at two schools which were identified by the Directorate General of Special Education and UNICEF. One was the Mental Health Centre in Peshawar operated by Mike and Christine Miles. It is an excellant, basic school for children who are mentally retarded and/or physically disabled. The second was the Asbar School, a school for non-disabled children that is without a doubt, quite progressive for **anywhere**–from its inception it has integrated children with a variety of disabilities into nearly every class. In both settings, we observed, and spent time talking with the children and the teachers.

We knew that we wanted the spots to be spontaneous, playful and active. But what should "the message" be? When nothing has been done before–the possibilities are vast, but the project is really "experimental." One didn't know what to stress when it came to a topic as broad as Childhood Disabilities. What, among many important things, would be *acceptable* to the viewing audience while being helpful and informative?

The answer came gradually from the children by coincidence. Local UNICEF Staff members took us around Peshawar and a Staff member's teenaged niece, Sony, spent some time with us. We explained to her what our project was about and asked what her questions would be about children who were disabled. We figured that if a 14 year old had these questions, a lot of other children would have similar questions. And our answer came–we should try to answer some very basic questions that the viewers, particularly children, would have about other children with disabilities.

Sony helped us tremendously. She gave us questions that could be answered; she introduced us to a few of her friends to whom we also talked and the three girls became part of the production itself. Instead of an anonymous voice-over asking questions, we filmed the girls, who represented "viewing children", and they helped to dispel a few myths while meeting a few new friends.

Here is an excerpt of what Sony wrote for us "to think about" when we went back to Islamabad, our base, after the visit and before returning later for the actual filming. These are her own words.

> *"When we used to live in Risalpur, one of our neighbors had a daughter about my age but she was mentally retarded. Each time I saw her certain questions arose in my mind and I am writing about some of them.*
>
> *Why was everyone so much tired of her? Why did nobody like her? She was neglected by her parents and her aunties cared for her. I want to know why–was she not their daughter? They used to scold her and become angry with her instead of calming her down because she couldn't understand what she was doing. It wasn't her fault–couldn't they understand? Can she be cured and if she can–how? I and other outsiders would become scared or we can say nervous when she used to pull your fingers and pull your earrings, etc. Why does it happen like this? She was their only daughter and why was she retarded? Why did God do this to their daughter?*
>
> *Till now I haven't got answers to any of these questions but I'm sure someday I'll find the answers to these questions."*

And then when we talked a bit more with Sony and her friends, they introduced other questions to us, such as:

> *Can you catch a disability? Were their parents bad to have such children? Do they "cure" these children in other countries? What should I do if they come over to me?*

Are these not the same questions that children all around the world ask?

Sony's questions solved another problem for us. We would produce a PSA for parents –with simple information about the **potential** for children with disabilities–even if they lived nowhere near a "facility" where they could get help. The reality in Pakistan today is that, despite tremendous efforts and expansion over the past few years, the majority of people are not within reach of existing services. As it stands now, some people walk miles to get physical therapy for their children–**if** they have been told that this service is available, and can be helpful, for their children. Most parents, however, simply do not know that anything **can** be done. Often, they will ask for special prayers to be said for their child; they might spend what little money they have for expensive medicines that they hear about but which might be useless or; they might hear rumors about a "foreign" cure or operation and then submit their child (and themselves) to this. However, as is the case anywhere, most parents are willing to do whatever they can for their child and will try anything that might help if they know about it.

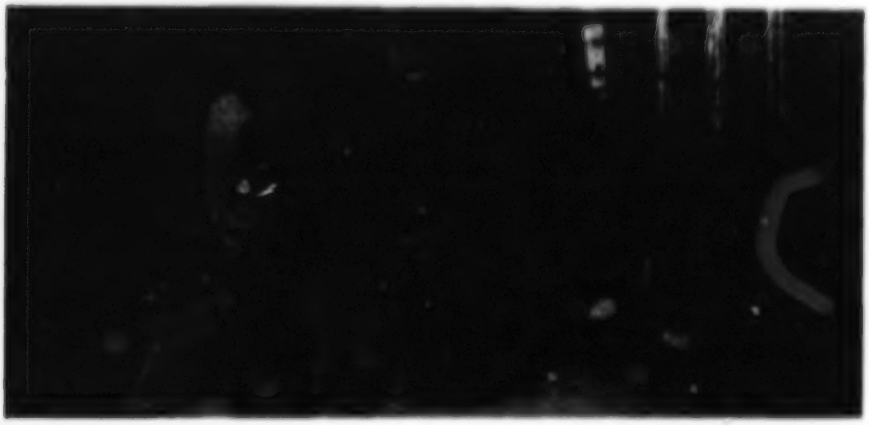
And so, five protoptype PSA's were produced for national television broadcast. To date, many of them have already been aired. Three of the PSA's are intended especially for children, one is for a general audience and one is specifically for parents. All of them show **children** as **children.** They are culturally appropriate and address one simple issue that, based on pre-production research, was of interest and importance to the community. They are designed to be "prototypes/models" for future productions which may: show more regional/national representations of children, show a specific type of infant/early stimulation, or illustrate the questions that this time a child who is disabled might have. Though made in and for Pakistan, my hunch is that they can be a springboard for creativity and adaptation in other countries. What follows is a rough English Translation of the Urdu script.

PSA # 1 – Nazia's Story

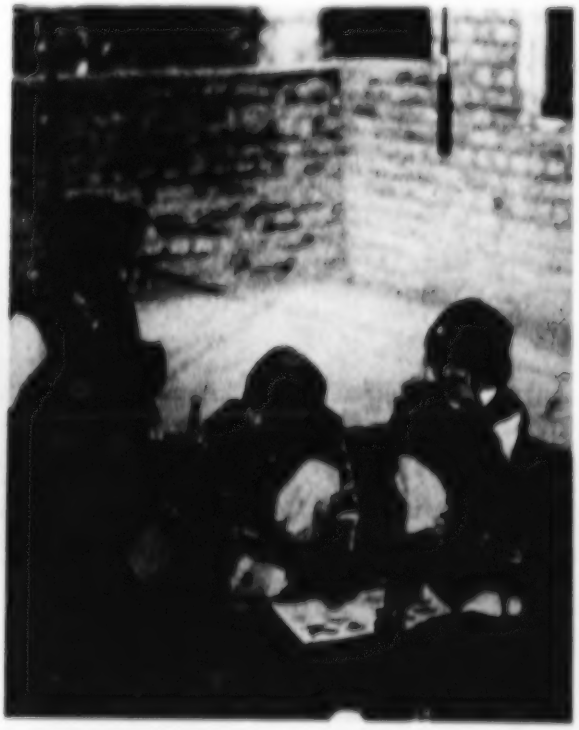
"Assalamulaikum. My name is Nazia. Today I'm going to tell you about something I've just learnt. Near my house there were two or three children who were mentally retarded. I used to feel very scared going near them. I thought 'If I play with them will I also become like them?' I asked many adults about this. They'd either scold me or say 'you mustn't ask such questions.' Or, they'd change the subject. I stopped asking but I still felt I should get an answer. Finally one day, I picked up the courage to ask my aunt once again. She said 'I won't be able to give you the right answer but I'll take you to a school where there are such kids.'She took me to a school. At first I was very scared because there were mentally retarded children and disabled children–I thought that if I went near them I'd become like them but their teacher explained things to me and slowly I mingled with them. Then I saw that when I spoke to them as a friend or tried making friends, they would express to me that they were happy–perhaps not in words like ordinary children, but by gestures and sounds. I stayed there for two or three days and in those two or three days I couldn't tell whether I was with kids like myself or with different types of kids. After these two-three days, I've understood one thing–if we make friends with such kids, pay attention to them; they seem just like us. They might not be able to reply in the same way, but they have the same feelings as all other kids."

PSA # 2 – Special or Ordinary Schools

Question: "Do children who have disabilities have to go only to special schools?"



Answer: "No, they don't have to. Look: this is an ordinary school where children with disabilities and other children work together–and play together."



(PSA # 3 is the same but aimed at adults/general audience.)

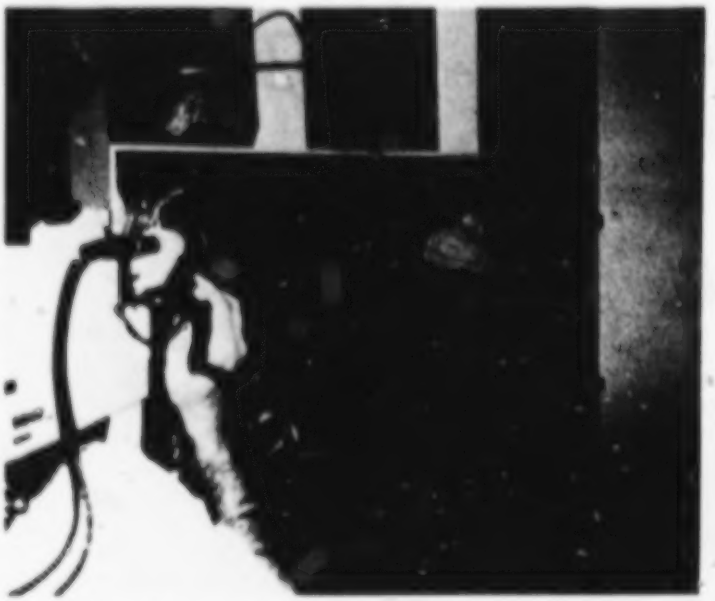
PSA # 4 – Zainab's Story

Have you ever met a child who was mentally retarded and wondered what you should do? Zainab wants to tell you her story–you might get some ideas.

"We had gone to the Afghan Refugee Camp beyond Jamrud Road–it's for destitute women and children. My uncle is a high official there so he'd taken us. As we entered (the camp) there was a disabled girl who was looking at me very strangely. At first I was scared–look what strange looks she's giving me! But then I saw that my elder sister went and shook her hand and she shook her hand very calmly. But she kept looking at me strangely because she knew I wasn't going near her and so she didn't like me. And then when sister went near her, she held her hand and roamed around with her all throughout. Then I realized that if someone extends a hand of friendship to them, they're very nice. When I was returning she herself shook hands with me and came to see me off. We were on our way and I thought 'they also have feelings and they must also feel so hurt when they're treated differently.' Because they're also just like us but if they're treated differently or if we say nasty things to them, they must also feel hurt (literally: their hearts must also be getting hurt)."

...And so, the next time, if you meet a child who is mentally retarded, try extending a hand of friendship.

PSA # 5 – A Parent's Story



"My child is mentally retarded. I used to think that he couldn't learn, that he couldn't even play. But now, I don't think this way anymore.

My child cannot be cured. He will always be retarded. But he does learn, he does play–he is a joy in our lives. He is doing lots of things we all thought he could never do.

If you have a child with a disability–please–stimulate him, pay attention to him, talk to him, play with him, help him exercise–and get him whatever education you can.

You will be happy you did–just like me."

Production of a 45 Minute Training Tape

There was a great deal of extra video footage that was shot that was not used in producing the five PSA's. Most of the time, this footage is put on a shelf, or the tapes re-used and some excellent material lost forever.

From all discussions held thoughout this media mission, it was evident that there was a dearth of video material which documented local educational efforts with children who are disabled. It therefore seemed a worthwhile effort to make use of some of the best footage shot both at the Mental Health Center and Asbar School for use by the Directorate General of Special Education in training people who will work with children who are disabled. Most of these trainees will not have seen disabled children, nor does the existing training course provide for "practical" experience–there just isn't the time, money or skills needed to allow for this. Hopefully, then, the videotape roughly-edited will show both "special" and "mainstreamed/integrated" settings where Pakistani children are speaking in local languages, playing local games, and learning cultually appropriate skills.

While making the tape, consideration was given to make it interesting for other groups as well. Two such groups might be parents of children who are disabled and the other could be any media team who might be commissioned by the Government or UNICEF to do a project about or for children who are disabled.

Photography Project

A local, professional photographer accompanied the video production team. He took photographs at both schools, at the home of one of the children and also during the interview with the three teenaged girls. Though the work he did was not up to "international professional standards", it was decided that the experience was well worth it, for again, the **process** as well as the following **product potentials:**

- as with the video team, the photographer was sensitized to a different way to look at telling a story about children with disabilities. He watched and listened very closely and again, as was the case with the video team, spent more and more "personal, contact time" with the children as the week progressed. One hopes that the next time he works on a similar project he will take this experience with him.

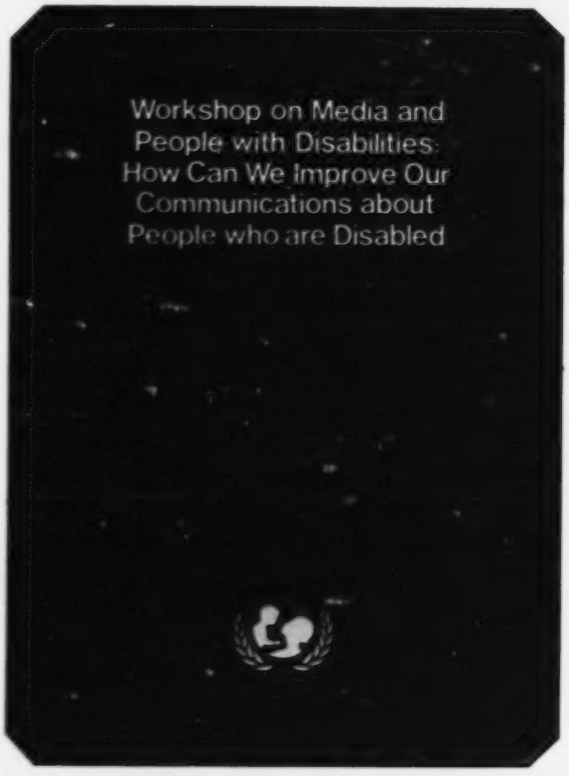
- the photos could be used either to give to another photographer as a "model" of the type of pictures to be taken. Or, realizing the dearth and need of public education print materials–they could be used **as is** in pamplets for parents, simple booklets for non-disabled children, handbills, etc.

Workshop on Media and People with Disabilities: How Can We Improve Communications About People with Disabilities February 21-22 1988, Islamabad Pakistan

A two-day workshop was held for people working in the media, disabled and not disabled, and selected people working in rehabilitation fields. The goal was to sensitize Workshop participants to ways in which they could improve their media efforts with regard to children and adults with disabilties. A number of Workshop Handouts/Resource Materials were developed and given to each participant.

My contributions included: assistance with organization; an opening presentation on historical perspectives on media and people with disabilities; a presentation on available research, especially with regard to attitude change; and continual screening and suggesting of methods for the critical evaluation of media (especially television and film) with regard to sensitive and accurate portrayals. The video segments included an international selection of children's shows, dramas, documentaries, situation comedies, interview programs, news shows, traditional puppetry from the region, commercials, public service announcements and magazine format programs designed especially for people with disabilities and their families.

As previously stated in the sections on other countries, some of the highlights of this Workshop were the presentations by people with disabilties from Pakistan; for example, Salma Maqbool, M.D., a woman who is blind and has served as host for a weekly radio program on issues relating to health and prevention of disability. She gave the audience many practical ideas of media that might be produced in the future, especially for women and girls who are blind in Pakistan and spend a great deal of time listening to the radio. She also stressed that the integration of people with disabilities into existing media was vital, e.g., depict a mother who uses a wheelchair holding her child lovingly; show a father playing with and exercising BOTH his boys–one disabled and not; show a family member who is disabled contributing to the welfare and ordinary life of the family.



Ms. Shahida Ahmed is the Chief Editor of *Ardarsh,* the first magazine specifically for people with disabilities in Pakistan. She explained that after becoming physically disabled, her "pen" became her most valuable tool and she wrote her first article about access for people with disabilities at a college where very few people who are disabled were enrolled. So far the feedback to her magazine is positive, especially with regard to the magazine being a forum where people with disabilities can bring their problems out into the open. She suggested topics for others in the media to also address–particularly women who are disabled marrying; helping people who have recently become disabled adjust emotionally; and early intervention and nurseries for children who are disabled.

Mr. Iftakhar has been the presenter of a ten minute daily and fifteen minute weekly program on television that is "signed" for people who are deaf. He spoke about his experience as the first actor who is deaf to work on National Television. He was quite keen on expanding this work and he and his colleagues who are deaf were delighted to screen and critically analyze programs for/about people who are deaf from other countries–and to discuss adaptations which would make such programs culturally appropriate.

On the final day of the Workshop, the participants were divided into five groups with specific assignments. The organizers all felt that the Workshop **had** to produce something that could be **used** immediately. The country has a great need and here for the first time was a combination of people and skills whose ideas could be immediately used to develop much these needed media materials. **Group 1** produced designs for a billboard and some posters for public places. **Group 2** produced some scripts for public service spots and suggested ways in which Workshop themes could be integrated into existing TV programs. **Group 3** produced a one page pamphlet for parents on general issues of disability. **Group 4** suggested the use of quiz questions, riddles and jingles on radio to provide information to non-disabled children to interact with a person with a disability. **Group 5** presented media pieces for children with disabilities and advocated the use of humor along with stressing that a disability is not something to be ashamed of. Many of the suggestions have been taken up by the Directorate General of Special Education and are being produced in some form, many with UNICEF assistance. The proceedings and ideas from the Workshop were written up into a Workshop Report/Booklet which includes numerous ideas for media products along with overall guidelines for productions.

Suggestions and Approaches for Inclusion of People with Disabilities on Pakistan TV

A number of Advocacy Meetings were held with officials and producers at Pakistan Television (PTV) during both of my visits to Pakistan. During the first visit in 1987, a special Workshop was held with producers, writers and crew on the topic of Children's Television. It was supposed to be an hour session and ended up lasting over three hours with considerable discussion, viewing, and learning on both sides.

During the second Mission, PTV (as well as Pakistan Radio) sent staff to the Media Workshop. The Director General of PTV also asked for specific suggestions that he could review for possible implementation after the Consultant left. What follows are excerpts from the suggestions along with specific "Handouts" that were used by the Consultant in training throughout the two months.

Suggestions for PTV Consideration:

1 A children's puppet show where one of the puppets has a disability. Several of the skits could be about health, nutrition, disability prevention, but many more would simply be regular cute, creative scripts where one of the puppets just happens to have a disability and no mention is made of it.

2 A science show which includes information about **low-cost technical aids** that make life easier for persons with disabilities; a science competition where children or adults solve a specific problem which helps them to better understand people who are disabled–for example, "how can you create a 'noisy ball' that contains an audio sound so that people who are blind can play cricket or soccer?", "what can you design so that a person could reach high objects from a sitting (wheelchair) position?", or, "can you develop a board with communication symbols that someone who can't read or speak can point to when they wish to communicate with you?".

3 A "detective" type show whose purpose is to investigate, or "detect" the causes of various diseases and disabilities–using a child-to-child approach.

4 A family health and exercise show which includes as part of its regular features, excercises for children who are disabled.

5 As part of an on-going drama series, include information on the prevention of various disabilities due to certain preventable causes, for example, "first cousin" marriages, taking of drugs, proper immunizations, etc.

6 A Public Service Announcement about various community development projects where people who are disabled are **providing** a much needed service to the community, tather than only **receiving** services.

7 When casting for any tv work, consider people who are disabled for common roles where their disability is not necessarily mentioned. For example: in crowd scenes, a parent who is blind diapering a child, a parent with polio playing with his/her child, some children who are disabled included in a school-quiz show.

8 Utilizing Mr. Iftikhar (the actor who is deaf) in programs that have nothing to do with deafness.

PTV has made very definite efforts in this area so far. In addition to the programs that are in sign language, they have included "actors playing the parts of people with disabilities" in some dramas and films. The beginning is similar to what has happened in other parts of the world. They have also obtained the rights of some award-winning films on the topic of disability to broadcast.

Two Original Children's Stories Which Can Be Adapted into Many Media in Different Cultures

The following two stories have been used as stimuli for many discussions in training workshops with people working in media and those who are working in the rehab field. They are based on, among other things:

- stories **for** children told **by** children
- a "child-to-child" approach whenever possible–that is, children being empowered to act for change within their environment
- portraying improvements for people with disabilities **as improvements** for the community–helping the audience to **identify** with persons who have special needs
- stressing simple, early intervention strategies for children with disabilities, as well as prevention measures like immunization
- stories which could be adapted into a t.v. segment, radio story, traditional puppet show, comic book, as in the following examples:

(1) "I Can Make A Difference"

Lots of people say "oh, you are just a child." And sometimes they even say, "oh, you are just a girl." So, even though I do my chores and my studies I kind of feel like I'm just there–if you know what I mean.

I told this to my grandmother one day, while I was helping her cook our family dinner. My grandmother told me a lot of things that day that made me change my mind about being both a child and a girl.

She said "You **can** make a difference in our village and in this world, you know. You already do. Think of all the things you do to help me, your parents, your younger brother and sisters. You learn to read and then you tell me what is happening by reading the paper to me, writing a letter for me–oh, there are lots of things." "But I want to do something **more**–something different", I said. And so right then and there, my grandmother and I worked out this plan.

She told me to really take a look around our village–at people, places and things. She said to look for things that I might think of that could help other people. Then she told me to think about what I like to do and see if I could match them up. Then my grandmother said to come back and have another talk with her again.

I saw a lot of things–but one thing that really got my attention was a lot of mothers who were so very busy that they didn't have much time to pay attention to their children. And I see a couple of children who never seemed to play–people said that they were "disabled". One couldn't use his hands and feet too well and two others were–just real slow and slept most of the time. I always stare at these kids–wondering what is going on with them and I find myself thinking about them a lot, too.

So, I came back and told my grandmother all of this. She said "You are a bright girl. You have seen someone who needs help and yes, you are very good with babies–see how much you play with your sisters and brother. Let us go to the Health Centre and ask the nurse if she knows anything that you could do for these little ones."

We did that and now–I can't wait to tell you what I am doing. It is lots of fun and even when I am tired, I find that I still have energy for these things–grandma says it is because I love my work. And, my sisters and brother like my new work too because I practice with them and let them come with me. Here is what I do:

- I learned to give a special massage–I relax the babies for a while, and then I tickle them and brush different parts of their body while I talk and sing to them about what I'm doing.

- I made a bunch of little toys–I filled matchboxes with tiny rocks, old beans, pits and a bell–and I try to get the babies to shake them.

- I take the babies for walks–in the rain, in the sun–to the busiest, noisy market and to the quietest place I can find.

- I take the babies to the Health Centre every two weeks–sometimes they get a shot and sometimes they just get weighed. And then I report back to their parents and they, so far, have been very happy with my news.

My teacher at school asked me to share what I do with my classmates. A few friends want to try the same thing–but I told them that they have to come up with their own idea–first look around and match what is needed with what they like to do. Now, it is like a game for our class.

My grandmother was right. Everyone says that at least two of the babies have improved since I have been working with them. But the Health Centre Nurse tells me that sometimes it takes a long time to see even a little progress. That's O.K.–I like what I am doing. The babies like me and so do their parents.

I can make a difference. I am making a difference.

(2) "How The Road Helped Everyone"

It all started one day when the man in our village who can't walk came to visit my father to ask for his help and advice. The man had been working in his house for the past fifteen years, making toys and household items like brooms and brushes. People used to buy from him but it wasn't what you would call a busy business, except around holiday time when everyone would be both cleaning and buying what little toys they could for their children.

Well, this man thought that it might be a good idea for him to take his wares around the village–it would save others' time and it might increase his sales. **But**–here is the hitch, the road needed to be paved so that he could wheel himself and his cart along. Up until now the main road–really the only road–was very bumpy and rocky and muddy–all the things that made it impossible for our friend to move around.

The problem was that the people he had spoken to before really didn't want the road paved–they didn't think that it **needed** to be paved. They said that there were other more important things that needed to be done than paving a road for just one man. I thought that this kind of made sense–we did have many people and many needs.

But my father is a wise man. He thought and thought and talked and talked it over with our friend. Finally, together, they came up with a plan. They would make sure that if the road was paved that people would realize that it helped **everyone.**

And here is a list of **all** the people in our village that were eventually helped by that smooth, shiny, paved road. Can you think of others in YOUR village or town that could be helped like this?

- The children whose goats carry heavy rocks to build the new building have a much easier time–they say the rocks don't fall as much because the goats are steadier.
- The woman who is blind and who teaches at a local school can now make visits to childrens' homes because it is easier for her to walk alone–people are saying that the children are doing better in school because their parents are more aware of what they are learning.
- The old man who delivers milk in a push cart gets his milk delivered faster–and with fewer bottles broken too!
- The woman with twin babies and another young child who still cannot walk can now push all her children in a wagon to the market with her everyday.
- Everyone who rides a bicycle to school and work says that the new road is terrific too.
- And me, well, sometimes I miss the rocks and mud and all, but–when I am finished with school and my chores, now my friends and I play a "hopscotch" game on the road or draw lots of designs with rocks and so yes, I think that the road is a good idea too!

In-house UNICEF Workshop on Children and Media

An in-house media workshop for UNICEF Staff from throughout Pakistan was also held and its objectives were to:

1 Allow each participant to produce his/her own media presentation on a pre-selected subject for presentation at the Workshop.

2 Review these products and delineate a list of criteria of what is "good media" for children.

3 Sensitize Project Officers on the types and approaches of media production for and about children.

4 Go through the process of determining a step-by-step workplan for media production and the role and responsibility of UNICEF Project Officers.

I used the second Pakistan Mission as examples for the above–the **process** of sensitizing the people working in the media with whom one has contact. The group critically analyzed both the PSA's as well as other prototype material produced over the two months. In addition, the group viewed numerous videotapes of programming for/about children–with disabilities. In all cases, both positive and negative points were discussed and analyzed.

Then, each representative presented a "sample script/project" and the group used the same deductive process to refine it. The following day, adaptations were made and plans for production of the materials were discussed.

As with the videotaping project, I worked together with Ms. Rina Gill, a filmmaker from the UNICEF Office who could draw upon her varied experience on other media projects for UNICEF.

Prior to leaving Pakistan, I was asked to provide a list of recommendations for follow-up. These suggestions included ways the UNICEF Office and Directorate General could make the most use of the material developed and training carried out. The recommendations were:

- monitor feedback after the PSA's were aired on television
- produce high quality material developed within the country (for example, radio scripts on rehabilitation by Mike Miles)
- distribute the Workshop Report (as well as a brailled version of it)
- integrate messages about children and adults with disabilties into existing UNICEF work (that is, in addition to "special" efforts primarily aimed at the also important area of prevention of disabilties)
- support projects that are community/family based, as well as institutional/special education based, along with media materials to support such projects
- collaborate with PTV or the Open University
- continued support to people working in the traditional media regarding culturally popular works that might be adapted to include elements about children or adults with disabilties.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the relatively few countries in which I have worked, there have been both vast differences and striking similarities. The differences have been cultural and budgetary. Similarities include the committment, enthusiasm and creativity of the people.

There have been a few common denominators, too, that I see as building blocks and that I have used in the different country situations. I have learned that they can be applied to each new experience and that the integration of these concepts can lead to a process as well as media products that are more culturally appropriate while empowering local people, disabled and not.

1 The advocacy and production process is a long and tedious one.

All over the world, people with disabilities are viewed as a minority group and in any country, have to fight for allocation of time and resources. It takes a great deal of time to sensitize, win over and educate representatives of the power structure in each country, particularly those responsible for media. This educational process includes, for example: building awareness of the rights of people with disabilities as equal to the rights of all citizens; sentitization regarding the potential damage that media products can do when messages are inaccurate or dehumanizing; demonstrating that prevention is important but that it is only part of the message that people must receive. People who are already disabled and their families need to receive information that improves the quality of their lives; and, awareness–creation that disability media needn't always be a **separate** program–and that disability messages can and should be integrated into existing media products for general audiences.

2 The process itself is as important as the product. What we "end up with" are Media Products but, each step in the production process is a learning experience. And each step is necessary in order to create long lasting changes as well as to allow people time to learn and incorporate the new ideas and approaches into their minds and work.

3 We should recognize that real progress in the area of media for/about people with disabilities can only be achieved by getting "outside the field" of rehabilitation. The reality is that small organizations and voluntary agencies have no significant media budgets and to a large extent, are marketing their own services, and not including societal concerns. It is, therefore, necessary to integrate disability concerns into societies' main processes representing mass media.

4 "Social marketing" techniques based on advertising principles are not transferable *as is* from the West. The messages and media must be meticulously adapted to each country/region. Whether it be the fast pace and stimulus bombardment of the West, or the assumptions that people need more products/technology to improve their lives–all of these factors must be individually calculated and decisions made by the target audience, not by those in the power structure or production houses alone.

5 Every country has a vast amount of good and useable media material. This material could be about services for children and adults with disabilities. Or it could be the wealth of traditional media/stories that are familiar to the people, some regional and some national. We should not assume that we need to come in with Western ideas/methods and that the local producers will simply adapt these. They have many ideas and methods based on their own culture. We should try to look for ways to combine the two, using the existing creative/knowledge and "piggyback" the new information.

6 Children's television is becoming increasingly important and popular in many countries. The potential for including children with disabilities and information about disability on these programs is great. Perhaps too, it is time for representatives of countries which have created Children's Programs to discuss together cross-cultural issues as well as national plans for making this area a priority.

I thank the World Rehabilitation Fund, in particular, Ms. Diane Woods, for the opportunity to write down what have been some of my most significant professional and personal experiences. I also thank Ms. Barbara Duncan and Mr. Robert Ruffner for their invaluable advice and editorial assistance.

Commentary

by Robert H. Ruffner
formerly with The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

"Developing Strategies" is far more than a practical primer on integrating disability into television programming in a divergent group of communities. It is an important philosophical discussion on the opportunities and pitfalls awaiting those of us who are trying to effect a radical improvement in the awareness and understanding of people with disabilities.

Ms. Kolucki astutely points out the vast differences in the communities in which she has worked, while highlighting the distressingly similar characteristics of each: apathy towards–and resistance to–disability; inability of the professional, voluntary, rehabilitation and educational organizations to effectively work with and through) the media; the lack of involvement of people with disabilities in organizations, in society, and particularly, in the media.

"Can Do"is her motto: the emphasis is on the positive, the possible, the importance of beginning, of producing something, even if the product is far less than perfect. She stresses the "process" fundamental to producing the changes needed if disability is going to be seen on television. While I recognize the importance of "process," I urge that the products be competitive from the very beginning, for if not, we will not achieve a lasting integration of disability into television programming. Hong Kong's award-winning materials and the U.S.'s *Sesame Street* are examples of meeting competition head on and coming out on top with lasting products.

A characteristic of all the communities in which Ms. Kolucki has worked is–competition for audience. Useful, practical information about disability must compete effectively with the local equivalent of soap operas, sit-coms, cops and robbers, and looney tunes. This is a tall order in a world beset by materialistic concerns and ambitions. A child with a disability is a strain on parents striving to succeed. People with disabilities are a strain on governments striving to move from developing to industrialized status. These governments–and their industries–prefer to ignore people with disabilities as a hindrance to progress. Even the most "privileged" of disabled people–disabled veterans of the world's many wars–can be ignored and isolated by the governments and societies for which they fought. A vivid example of this happened a few years ago when Ms. Kolucki and I were both participating in an international "media and disability" conference in a rapidly developing nation. While we conferred in air-conditioned halls, disabled veterans were demonstrating in nearby streets about the lack of support afforded to them by their government and society.

Ms. Kolucki attacks this resistance to disability by outlining first steps to the "concerned": rehabilitators and educators, volunteers, parents and children with disabilities. This is the nucleus and then you move on to children without disabilities, writers, producers, editors, researchers and other media professionals. Stressing the need for the involvement of people with disabilities at every step of the process, she recommends a broad, integrated approach into current programming wherever possible. She urges the avoidance of segregated, special programs.

Convinced of the importance of childrens' television as a means of introducing disability in an integrated, informal and entertaining vehicle, she outlines the planning steps and considerations useful in any community. Where there are no existing childrens' programs, she suggests ways to create them, find broad support for them, and get off to a strong integrated start. She understands the significance of audience research, of blinding indigenous formats with television techniques, of reaching to the important secondary audience–adults.

Childrens' television can be an important addition to traditional rehabilitation and education programs. Television reaches every nook and cranny and can be a positive support for parents and children while educating them and their neighbors. "Sesame Street" has demonstrated that sign language can interest a broad audience of nondisabled children while creating an interest in deafness that otherwise might never have occurred. Monitoring responses and reactions to television programs incorporating disability subjects is an important reinforcement of the impact and competitiveness of the programming.

Ms. Kolucki's list of "do's and don'ts" should be required reading for all professionals working with people with disabilities: do be entertaining, don't preach, do include people with disabilities in every aspect of the planning and production, do include people with disabilities as their own spokespeople, do work with traditional modes of entertainment (puppets, cartoons, etc.), don't patronize the audience or the program participants, do accept behavior (staring, fearfulness) as "natural", do reinforce continuously, do use multi-media approaches (books, dolls, toys to accompany the programs), do respect traditions and established beliefs, do work with reality.

She sensibly rejects the "my way is the only way" approach while working in different societies. She understands the strengths and the limits of the consultant/expert: listen, learn, respect, and then–act to reach (produce) a consensus on approaches and programming needs.

Refreshingly, she does not offer sweeping vistas of a new world order that would come about if all nations followed her excellent advice and integrated disability into childrens' television programming. As a media professional and disability advocate, she knows the limitations of the medium and the episodic attention–and retention–span of all television viewers.

Ms. Kolucki justifies her belief that childrens' television programming is an important wedge to greater awareness and appreciation of disability. It must, however, be accompanied by strong reinforcement throughout the society if it is to have a lasting impact. If, for example, children with disabilities are completely isolated from the activities of their community, television integration will be more of a fantasy than a reality. Perhaps the single most important contribution that childrens' television incorporating disability can have is to help the child with a disability realize the possibilities of their own lives and to generate a growth in self respect. This, in turn, can translate into a more self-reliant disabled adult, an adult who will be willing to participate in independent living movements and strive for a fuller life.

Increasingly, a characteristic of both developing and developed societies, is an understanding of the necessity for people with disabilities to grasp their own destinies and futures. Integrated childrens' television can further this understanding toward a societal reality that being "different" will not automatically mean being isolated. The process–and the product–can produce real results.

Commentary
by

Louise Duval, Ph.D.
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Bronx, New York

Barbara Kolucki's "Developing Strategies for Communications about Disability: Experiences in the U.S., Hong Kong, India and Pakistan" is an important contribution in the areas of 'media and disability'. Today, the topic of 'media', by which I mean electronic communication technologies, is 'core' in our understanding of how humans connect, organize and develop representational images of themselves and their surroundings. As Irv Zola has stated, much of what the general public "knows" or thinks it knows comes from what it hears, sees, and reads from secondary sources—the media.

What is singled out as undesirable is often historically and culturally variable. Social scientists, activists, and advocates argue the criteria for determining disability are as much social and political as the presence of any physical and/or psychological differences. For example, in the United States we value very highly independence, freedom of movement and choice, upward mobility in the social and economic sphere, and physical strength, which are all generally denied the physically and mentally impaired. Put another way, we in the U.S. have a very difficult time understanding or even handling any visible form of difference. One of the major perpetuators of negative images of the disabled which influence one's attitudes is the media. As an anthropologist, respecting cultural and physical differences is a governing principle in my life. As Ruth Benedict stated, "Anthropology is *the field which* makes the world safe for human difference."

Ms. Kolucki draws on her experiences in cross-cultural settings in a true anthropological fashion by developing her insightful concepts on the production of media (particularly television) by sensitizing herself as much as possible to the cultural differences of the people with whom she worked. The recognition of the importance of the inclusion of the cultural values and beliefs that differed from her own is the major strength in this work. Her previous experiences of working with children and helping establish a viable children's television program ("Sesame Street") with the inclusion of children with disabilities serve her well in adapting training procedures and scripts sensitive to each of the four countries' needs, priorities, personnel and cultural stereotypes.

Based on my own experiences as an anthropologist with a disability working in academic and medical research settings, I think Ms. Kolucki's manuscript could benefit others primarily in the areas of teaching and media production. Ms. Kolucki is particularly effective in expressing how she began to establish inroads into the different cultural settings and benefitted from mistakes she made when, as she says, "I was too American". The six observations at the

end of her manuscript could be particularly useful in these two important areas: (1) for teaching in the social sciences, including the Communication Arts, and (2) for cultural consultants to media production companies.

The basic questions raised by Ms. Kolucki pertaining to the necessity of getting "outside the field" of rehabilitation for real progress to take place in media production for and about people with disabilities is crucial. Rehabilitation's linkage to biomedical concepts is damaging to persons with disabilities in the West because of the development of differences based on deficits. Her understanding of the significance of this separation shows how insightful her concepts are for the much valued equal participation and equal sharing of the good and services produced by society by members of the disability community in the U.S. However, the control of certain resources so to be able to act 'independently' is a value that is clearly Western as it pertains to the 'rights of the individual'. We must be aware of 'our' cultural values and not assume they will have the same value for other cultures.

This brief review of Ms. Kolucki's manuscript does not do full justice to her work. I hope she will continue in this endeavor and share with us her sensitive and insightful thoughts.

Another Approach

by Sandra Gordon
Vice President, Communications
National Easter Seal Society

In "Developing Strategies for Communications about Disability," Barbara Kolucki speaks to four "beliefs" regarding communications and changing attitudes about disabilities:

1) Children's television is one of the most important vehicles in the area of primary prevention;

2) You must know your audience when developing programs or messages;

3) Strive for active participation from your target audience;

4) Involve resources that are familiar to your target audience.

The National Easter Seal Society believes children's television is certainly an important resource in the area of primary prevention of negative attitudes about disability. We, however, have not limited our communications, advocacy and public education efforts to this one source or population group.

Our multi-media public education and advocacy campaigns have received national recognition. Working with Campbell-Methun-Esty, a Minneapolis advertising agency that donates its creative services to Easter Seals, we begin each campaign by developing a creative blueprint. The purpose of the campaign is clearly defined, the goal or desired outcome is determined, the target audience is defined and research is conducted to profile the audience and its attitudes. The blueprint also defines the desired attitude change, desired action, our main "selling" proposition, and the personality the campaign will have.

For example, a main purpose of our efforts is to educate various groups about the normalcy of people with disabilities. Pointed messages are aimed at people without disabilities to build acceptance and understanding of people who happen to have disabilities.

We have improved upon the old-fashioned sympathy ploy still used in many health-related or charitable campaigns by showing that people with disabilities are just normal, ordinary folks like everybody else. They don't want to be different or extraordinary. They just want to be accepted.

The first advocacy or attitude-change campaign was targeted to the general public and included a television public service announcement called "just Dad." It shows a father who gets up during the night to feed his infant son. The man's disability is hidden until the end of

the spot when the camera pulls back on the man feeding the infant. He has an artificial hand. The voiceover says, "What you see her is not a man who is disabled, but a man who is simply Dad." Posters of "Dad" holding his son were also developed, along with other thought-provoking posters, billboards, radio public service announcements and public service print aids.

Attitudes.
Will she marry me?
Disability Etiquette:
When you wish to talk with a person who has a disability, speak directly to that person rather than through a companion who may be along.

The second-year-advocacy campaign was designed to build on the momentum of the former year's campaign. The multi-media campaign draws the public's attention to the person rather than the disability and focuses on what is similar rather than what is different about a person with a disability.

"Smiles," the follow up television public service announcement, shows a group of high school students going to their lockers during a class-change period. A teenage girl tries not to be obvious when she notices a good looking boy at the locker next to hers. Meanwhile, a group of "friends" causes the girl's book to fall from her locker and the boy she really wants to meet bends down to pick up the book. Until that time, we only see the girl from waist up. But as the boy reaches to the floor to retrieve the book, we see the girl wears leg braces. The boy returns the book to the girl with a big smile, she smiles back and we see she also has braces on her teeth. The voiceover says, "With your help, some kids with braces aren't afraid to smile." A similar poster was developed with a girl who uses crutches and wears leg braces showing a big smile. The poster is captioned, "Some 13-year-olds with braces don't hide their smiles." Other ads, posters, billboards, radio PSAs and scripts have the same theme–people with disabilities are just like everyone else. They don't want to be different or extraordinary–just accepted.

Our public education campaigns have taken on different themes. "Attitudes" was developed to eliminate negative, stereotyping attitudes that obstruct independent, dignified lifestyles for people who have disabilities. A television PSA was created to deal with three myths about people who have disabilities and "close the book" on these myths. In addition, four brochures were developed: *Myths and Facts about People who Have Disabilities; Myths and Facts about People without Disabilities; Disability Etiquette* (preferred etiquette when meeting, introduc-

Actually, names hurt just as much as sticks and stones.

ing, or assisting a person who has a disability); and *Portraying People with Disabilities in the Media,* which suggests language, guidelines and interviewing techniques for print and broadcast writers and reporters.

Humor is used throughout the "Attitudes" campaign, from humorous situations depicted in the television PSA to cartoon artwork in the brochures. For example in the brochure developed for the media, writers are counseled to choose words that carry nonjudgmental connotations and ones that are accurate descriptions. Writers are counseled to avoid using the words courageous, brave or inspired when referring to someone who has a disability. Adapting to a disability does not necessarily include acquiring these traits. Instead of describing someone as "wheelchair bound" or "confined to a wheelchair," the media are encouraged to say "uses a wheelchair." A cartoon adjacent to the section is titled "Wheelchair Bound" and shows a man bound, tied and chained to his wheelchair to drive home the inaccurate description of a person who uses a wheelchair.

Our follow-up public education and advocacy campaign is called "Friends Who Care."

Targeted to school-aged children, the entire campaign stresses just how lonely a kid with a disability feels and how much he or she wants to be accepted simply as a kid. Powerful ads and posters were developed with headlines such as, "Even a deaf kid can hear what's being said" (with a photo of a peer group talking about the person with the hearing impairment) or "Actually names hurt just as much as sticks and stones."

"Wheelchair" is the television PSA developed as part of the "Friends Who Care" campaign. As the spot opens, we see a long shot of a hallway. As the camera zooms in, we can faintly see an empty wheelchair at the end of the hall near a stairwell. The voiceover says, "When you're a kid with a disability, you can get treated pretty badly. Sometimes you get teased, picked on, called names. And you know what that feels like?" Then we see a foot push the wheelchair down the stairs. After the wheelchair bounces down all the stairs and hits bottom, the voiceover says, "Well, now you know!"

Again, through multi-faceted, multi-media campaigns, we are attempting to attack prejudices early in life as well as in other stages of life.

Another example of the use of humor in helping people who do not have disabilities understand people who do is the Easter Seal play, "Doin' the Reality Rag." Easter Seals commissioned the play, which is a comedy revue about life as it really is for people who just happen to have disabilities, to drive home the point that most of us experience the same life situations, no matter who we are or what abilities or disabilities we have. The cast of "Rag" is made up of people with and without disabilities.

One of the songs sung by the actors who have disabilities goes like this:

"Yes, it is true, we have our disabilities
But we really don't want to be admired
It is not something extraordinary
So why do people say they are inspired?

We don't want to be inspirational
This seems to be what has transpired
We don't want this song to be educational
But we hate it when they say they are inspired.

That's not the only word we wish they would revoke
Of brave and courageous we are tired
But the guy who says, 'You know, they are just
plain folk.' Now that's the man who truly is

Inspired, inspired
He's the one who is inspired
It's not hard to be
Like him or like me
But for God's sake please don't be inspired."

When humor is used in our advocacy and public education campaigns, the dignity of people with disabilities is at the forefront of our efforts. In our ads, posters, television announcements or our play, depiction of people with disabilities is always done in a dignified manner.

In this same vein, when people with disabilities appear on the annual Easter Seal telethon, to relate how they and their families were helped through Easter Seal programs and services, their dignity is always in the forefront of the appeal. The telethon also provides Easter Seals with an opportunity to define issues of importance to people with disabilities and to advocate on behalf of these issues.

For example, during the 1989 telethon, Susie Haake, a person with a disability who is very involved in the Independent Living Movement, spoke out in behalf of people with disabilities taking charge of their own lives. Haake said, "For years, doctors and therapists, parents and guardians felt that they knew what was best for a person with a disability." Haake continues, "The Independent Living Movement tells us that only we know what is best for ourselves." She then goes on to advocate for accessibility, which, she says, ". . .can mean many things. It can mean having personal care so we can live in our own home. . .it can mean a lift-equipped bus so we can get to work. . .it can mean buildings with reserved parking and accessible bathrooms. . ."

The road of changing attitudes and communicating about people with disabilities is long and sometimes fraught with obstacles. One way Easter Seals has chosen to speed up the process is to band together with other groups concerned with communications and disability. The National Easter Seal Society recently joined forces with the American Association of Disability Communicators to keep alive the quarterly AADC newsletter that is a resource to all disability communicators.

All in all, we are making progress in communicating about disability, and the National Easter Seal Society will continue to use its multi-media approach in all advocacy and public education campaigns. We have found this approach to work best in our 70 years of helping people with disabilities reach their highest level of potential, dignity and independence.

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